

# Tooth Whitening

Interest in tooth whitening has grown exponentially. The idea that yellow, discoloured teeth can be whitened in a simple and safe manner has caught the imagination of the general public and has gained popularity.

A whiter smile is equated with youth and wellness and gives patients a sense of improved self esteem. These patients become walking adverts for your practice. Dr Gordon Christensen said that the procedure of tooth whitening is the single most important behaviour-changing procedure available to dentists. Patients simply love their whiter smiles and tell their friends and family.

The US Journal of Aesthetic dentistry reported that of those patients who have had tooth whitening, 80% of patients return for further aesthetic dentistry. Many dentists may not be ready for the influx of patients requesting further aesthetic dentistry procedures, so there may be a steep learning curve involved for those dentists interested in building up the cosmetic aesthetic side of their practice. DENTSPLY and their bleaching materials and aesthetic dental materials will help you to build this side of your practice. The Independent newspaper reported in August 2007 that the UK has seen a 150% increase in cosmetic dentistry, and patients willing to spend money on improving their smiles will rise to 1 billion pounds by the year 2010. The future looks good for those dentists willing to move their practice towards aesthetic dentistry.

Due to the legal issues which remain controversial, it seems that these products have been classified as cosmetic devices by the Law Lords Ruling (2001). The beauty therapists, tanning salons and hair dressers interpret this classification by meaning that they can undertake these treatments. There is a threat from the non-dental practitioners who undertake cosmetic tooth whitening illegally. Some of the products that they use have no published research or safety evidence in dental literature and some have a very low pH which has been reported to cause damage to the enamel. Some beauty companies are marketing heavily on cruise liners and potential clients who had never thought of tooth whitening are having these treatments at the beauty therapist. Some of these results have been disastrous with the lustre being removed from the enamel and the teeth becoming rough.

The Secretary for Health, Anne Kean, made a statement in July 2007 that only registered dentists should undertake tooth whitening, which includes the light and the laser. This was as a result of a question asked in the House of Commons, by Sir Paul Beresford following the formation of the new British Dental Bleaching Society earlier this year. The General Dental Council has ruled that tooth whitening is the practice of dentistry and only registered dentists should undertake this treatment. If they receive information that non-dental practitioners are undertaking this treatment, they will prosecute them.



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There is now plenty of research to show that dental bleaching products are safe, effective and have a long lasting effect if the products are used according to the manufacturer's instructions. Patient selection and evaluation is important in selecting the correct treatment for the patient. Comprehensive records and information should be given to patients as to what to expect and the benefits and risks of the treatments. The Protection Societies request that you provide patients with the comprehensive information and what to expect in terms of the side effects and benefits. Dealing with sensitivity should be discussed with the patients. Both Power and Home bleaching techniques have plenty of associated research and are useful to suit patients' different needs. The DENTSPLY chairside technique is useful for patients and can be used without a light. It is easy to use and does not require gingival protection if the correct amount of product is used. It is placed directly into the mouth on trays when it becomes a "mozzarella" consistency.

The home bleaching products are effective and easy to use with excellent packaging for patients to take home. The use of fluoride will reduce the incidence of sensitivity.

## Summary

Tooth Whitening is now the most requested service from patients amongst all dental procedures. This is according to the latest survey by the American Dental Association. Dentists need to be able to deliver excellent bleaching treatments and programmes for patients which are predictable and successful every time.

As bleaching forms part of the first part of any aesthetic treatment, it is essential that this is undertaken in an efficient and appropriate manner and that careful treatment planning is undertaken. It is a simple and conservative treatment. Other alternatives to veneers can be undertaken after bleaching but there are certain guidelines to follow, as there are restrictions to bonding and veneers.

For further details on The British Dental Bleaching Society and to become a member of the group, please contact Linda on [l.greenwall@btconnect.com](mailto:l.greenwall@btconnect.com). Full details of the membership certification programmes will be reported on the website [www.bdbs.co.uk](http://www.bdbs.co.uk)

## With best wishes

Linda Greenwall

Contact DENTSPLY on +44 (0)800 072 3313 now to find out about the Illuminé tooth whitening system.



**Linda Greenwall**  
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Dr. Greenwall is a Prosthodontist and Specialist in Restorative Dentistry and practices in a multi-specialist practice in London. She has written several text books on Tooth Whitening and is the author of numerous publications on the subject. Her book entitled "Bleaching Techniques in Restorative Dentistry" won Best New Dental Book in 2001 and has been translated into 4 languages. Her second book and e-learning programme entitled "The Bleaching Business" is an interactive teaching tool associated with all aspects of tooth whitening for the dental team. Her third book, written together with Dr. So-ran Kwon, is entitled "Tooth Whitening in Aesthetic Dentistry" and published by Quintessence Books.

Linda has now established The British Dental Bleaching Society, together with the help of Sir Paul Beresford, M.P. She is President of this newly formed group. This group aims to change and improve the difficult position for UK and European dentists associated with tooth whitening.

She is Editor-in-Chief of the journal "Aesthetic Dentistry Today", the premier journal in the UK for Aesthetic Dentistry. She is Assistant Course Director for the Certificate in Aesthetic Dentistry (ACAD) at the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners at The Royal College of Surgeons of England.