

College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia

Position

on

Tooth Bleaching/Whitening

Background:

The popularity of tooth bleaching/whitening has grown in recent years. As a result, a wide variety of products and techniques are available to the public. Although tooth bleaching/whitening is not a regulated industry in Nova Scotia, dental hygienists are among the professionals who are able to provide this cosmetic service to their clients when the client expresses an interest. It is in the best interests of the public to inquire about potential outcomes, side effects, and complications related to their existing dental work prior to any tooth bleaching procedures.

Position:

The safety and effectiveness of tooth bleaching for the purpose of improving esthetics is supported by current research, providing it is undertaken by an oral health professional, and used according to the manufacturer's directions.

Tooth discoloration may result from a variety of causes including tooth decay, advancing age, food, beverages, smoking, and medications. It should be noted that crowns, fillings, and other dental materials are not affected by the bleaching process. Furthermore, where irregular tooth discoloration exists due to age, medication, or fluorosis, bleaching may produce irregular results and an unsatisfactory outcome.

The concentration of bleaching materials as well as the mechanism of delivery (tray, strip, or paint-on method) determines the outcome of the bleaching procedure, including the degree to which the teeth appear whiter, the evenness of the shading, and the speed of the change in color.

Bleaching may cause adverse effects, including sensitivity and soft tissue irritation. Long-term effects of repeated bleaching, particularly when or if products are used inappropriately or excessively, are not fully documented and may include pitting of enamel and pulp damage.

Bleaching is not recommended during pregnancy, or for children under the age of 12.ⁱ

ⁱ CDA Position on Tooth Bleaching and Whitening