After Whitening: Helping Your Enamel Recover

A simple aftercare plan for the days after whitening strips, trays, or an in-office treatment

Whitening can leave the outer surface of your enamel slightly softer and rougher for a short time. This is normal and temporary — your saliva naturally re-hardens enamel, usually within **one to two weeks**. The steps below simply support that process.

Right After Each Whitening Session

- **Rinse** your mouth with plain water and remove all gel from teeth and gums.
- **Wait about 1 hour before brushing.** Brushing right away scrubs a softened surface.
- If we gave you a **calcium-phosphate paste** (such as CPP-ACP) or a fluoride product, use it **after** the session, not before. Spread it on the teeth or in the tray for the time on the label (often a few minutes) and, if instructed, don't rinse it off.

For the Next Two Weeks

- Brush gently twice a day with a **fluoride toothpaste**. Choose a low-abrasive, non-whitening one for now — whitening toothpastes work by scrubbing.
- Use a **soft toothbrush** and light pressure.
- Go easy on **acidic drinks and foods** (soda, sports drinks, citrus, wine) and rinse with water after them. Don't brush for about 30–60 minutes after acid.
- Dark-staining foods and drinks (coffee, tea, red wine) are best limited in the first day or two.
- Don't whiten more often or for longer than directed — leaving strips or gel on longer doesn't whiten faster, it mainly adds sensitivity.

If Your Teeth Are Sensitive

- Mild sensitivity is common and usually fades within about a week of stopping. Pause whitening for a few days, or skip days between sessions.
- A toothpaste for sensitive teeth (for example, one with potassium nitrate) can help.
- Sip cold drinks rather than gulping them, and avoid very hot or cold food while teeth are sensitive.

Extra Care If You Have a Dry Mouth or Get Cavities Easily

Saliva does the repair work, so enamel can recover more slowly if your mouth is dry (from medications, medical conditions, or mouth-breathing) or if you are prone to cavities. Tell us — we may suggest a daily calcium-phosphate or fluoride product and a fluoride treatment at the end of your whitening course. Sipping water and sugar-free gum can also help keep saliva flowing.

■ Call Us If

Sensitivity is severe or lasts well beyond a week after you stop whitening • you have pain that wakes you at night or lingers after hot or cold • your gums are burning, white, or sore • you notice a cracked or chipped tooth.

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General guidance only — always follow instructions given to you at your visit. Questions? Call us anytime.

Most of the research behind these steps comes from laboratory and short-term studies, so think of them as sensible, low-risk support rather than strict rules. See also our **Teeth Whitening Aftercare** handout and our blog post **How to Whiten Your Teeth Safely**.