

What peroxide concentration should a teeth whitener contain?

How to get results when using a peroxide-based teeth whitener?

The process of peroxide-based teeth whitening is simply a case of cause and effect. Successful teeth whitening requires exposing a tooth's surface to an appropriate peroxide whitener, for an appropriate duration. It's really just about that basic.

In light of this knowledge, a person might anticipate that they will get the fastest and best whitening results when using the whitening product that contains the strongest concentration of peroxide available. Hopefully we can explain to you why this may not be the most accurate, or prudent, train of thought...

Creating a potential for side effects.

All peroxide-based teeth whitening systems have the potential to create similar treatment side effects. The two most common of these are tooth sensitivity and gum irritation.

While clearly not all people will experience the common side effects associated with the use of peroxide-based teeth whiteners there is a generalized consensus in the dental community that while higher concentrations of peroxides can produce whitening at a *slightly* faster rate, these higher concentration products are also typically associated with a higher incidence of side effects.

So, as an example, while the length of time it takes for you to accomplish the same whitening levels with a tray-based 10% carbamide whitener vs. a 15% one will probably be very small, a 10% product will be less likely to produce side effects. Side effects that might force you to perform whitening treatments less frequently or else terminate treatments all together until the side effects have subsided. Both of these instances could easily cause the total treatment duration to be longer than if the lower concentration whitener had just been used initially.

Is there a difference in the overall whitening level achieved by different concentrations of peroxide?

This may surprise you but the total overall whitening effect produced by a whitener containing a lower concentration of peroxide (say a tray-based system using a 10% carbamide peroxide whitener) is the same as for a similarly utilized product containing a higher concentration (such as a 15% carbamide peroxide whitener), it just takes a *little* longer.

Stated more accurately, whiteners (when utilized in conjunction with the same whitening technique) containing a higher concentration of peroxide can possibly

whiten teeth to a lighter shade initially, but this level of whiteness will not be stable. This state of maximum whiteness will relapse during those first few days and weeks after the bleaching process has been completed.

Now this type of relapse will occur with any type of peroxide-based teeth whitening, but the amount of relapse is greater with the higher concentration of peroxides. For all practical purposes the end result, using either the higher or lower concentration of peroxide, will be the same.

So here's the bottom line regarding the peroxide concentration found in teeth whiteners...

With a whitener containing a higher concentration of peroxide (when utilized with the same whitening technique)...

- you might bleach your teeth slightly faster,...
- to possibly a higher degree of whiteness,...
- with most likely a greater potential for developing side effects,...

- ...only to have the whitening effects you achieve relapse back to the same level of whitening you could have achieved with the lower concentration teeth whitener.