



# What's a Good In-Office Whitening System?

Townies discuss which whitening systems have worked well for their patients

Dentaltown.com > Message Boards > Cosmetic Dentistry > Bleaching / Whitening > What's a Good In-Office Whitening System? >

**DDSFZ**

Member Since: 08/21/11

Post: 1 of 53

Hi. I've just started a new office and cannot decide what in-office whitening system to go with. Any and all suggestions, recommendations and advice are welcome. Thank you. ■

7/20/2012

**stoma-tolog**

Member Since: 07/23/07

Post: 3 of 53

I've used both Opalescence Boost chairside system and Zoom. Results are the same, in my opinion. Patients feel they are getting better results with the Zoom. ■

7/20/2012

**Tthgr8t**

Member Since: 09/21/08

Post: 4 of 53

For me the Zoom light was a nuisance. Just as good results with Boost. Got to give them take-home for follow-up anyway. Give a good consent form to cover expectations for in-office whitening and for what you need to do as follow-up. ■

7/20/2012

**Costanza**

Member Since: 01/09/06

Post: 5 of 53

Kor is great for the stubborn cases. I'll post my most recent case on Tuesday when he comes back for the last session. Pretty dramatic result. But for your run-of-the-mill whitening case (not terribly dark/tetracycline-stained teeth) I use Opalescence and a bleaching tray (take-home). ■

7/20/2012

**Ivmike**

Member Since: 04/14/06

Post: 6 of 53

I have tried a few over the years. My favorite is Ultradent's Boost. No lights or gimmicks involved. I have been using it since 2007, I have done hundreds (high hundreds) and have consistently gotten good to great results (with gray teeth, not great results). As far as sensitivity goes, it is not as bad as other systems out there. I follow up with the patients after and ask them about their sensitivity, if any.

Patients do report sensitivity; however, it does not last past one day (24 hours after whitening). I used to consistently get sensitivity with Zoom for several days. A tip: Go to Walgreens and get a bottle of Vitamin E. If any whitening agent gets on tissue, apply it generously with cotton swab. I hope my experience helps—good luck! ■

7/20/2012

**DDSFZ**

Member Since: 08/21/11

Post: 8 of 53

Thank you all for your advice. The Ultradent whitening products do seem to have good reviews on this site. I already have a take-home whitening kit that I offer patients. In-office teeth whitening seems to be a good added service to offer patients. I'll look more into the Ultradent Boost. Thank you! ■

7/21/2012

**Lovin life**

Member Since: 07/31/04

Post: 9 of 53

I've tried Ultradent Boost and it's OK, but not the results that I would like. I always suggest take-home after; however, how long should a patient be using the take-home trays? What are the average costs out there for the take-home trays or in-office? ■

8/28/2012

**sjunco**

Member Since: 12/07/09

Post: 12 of 53

I started out using Zoom and got some good results, but not very consistent. The Ultradent

Continued on p. 50

rep came by at some point and talked me into trying their Boost system. I did not get good results from this system. For the in-office price that is charged, the Boost system did not back up those results. I have now switched over to the Kor system and have so far been very pleased with the results. ■

8/30/2012

**skuzma2dds**

Member Since: 08/06/07

Post: 13 of 53

Can you tell me about Kor? I'm interested in starting cases with it. Is it in-office or take-home? I heard something about two in-office visits with bleaching at home in between. What's the total cost per patient to you? Thanks. ■

8/30/2012

**Brian**

Member Since: 03/22/00

Post: 24 of 53

What is the status of the "bleaching pens?" I was pulled aside at a meeting last year by an overzealous rep selling these things. I kept asking whether the material on the teeth dispensed from the pens would be instantly deactivated by saliva and easily wiped off. He blew off my question, but it still stands that something like this really would be limited in its effect. ■

2/3/2013

**Rod**

Member Since: 03/17/00

Post: 27 of 53

OK, whitening pens. Where do I start? Glutathione peroxidase is an endogenous antioxidant enzyme that is found in very high concentration in both saliva and sulcular fluid.

The average human body forms about 650mg of hydrogen peroxide every 24 hours during oxygen metabolism in the mitochondria. Remember that HP can break down two different pathways, to simply water and molecular oxygen, or to various radicals and ions such as perhydroxyl radicals, hydroxyl radicals, superoxide radicals, oxygen ions and hydrogen ions. (Remember hydrogen ions are acid. That's where the term "pH" comes from: "potential of hydrogen.")

As we all know, if radicals went through our entire system 24 hours a day, it would cause oxidative stress and multiple health problems. So the body manufactures several different antioxidant enzymes, and of course we hear all the time that we should eat foods rich in antioxidants as well as take supplements that have antioxidants in them.

But what is an antioxidant? An antioxidant prevents hydrogen peroxide from breaking down to radicals and allows it to break down only to oxygen and water. Also remember, molecular oxygen does very, very little for us in terms of whitening. It's the radicals that get teeth white. So as soon as any peroxide comes in contact with salivary and sulcular fluid peroxidase, the peroxide is forced to instantly break down to only water and molecular oxygen. That's why we see the bubbles.

So with whitening pens, as soon as they come into contact with saliva, they break down to oxygen and water.

Does this do much good for initial whitening? Nope. Not nearly enough time, and very few radicals. But remember that peroxide whitening has two phases that work simultaneously. One is called "oxygenation," which is like those scrubbing bubbles. You get a lot of very microscopic agitation, which helps break up long-chain stain molecules and remove the chunks via diffusion. This takes hours to be very effective in initial whitening.

But once you have already whitened, that oxygenation phase of whitening has already cleansed the surface enamel of the teeth. And as you know, the approach we take with Kor whitening is specifically to lengthen the time and effectiveness of this process so that teeth can be cleansed so much that adults' teeth can be rejuvenated back to where they were when they were young.

After all, every dentist who's whitened the teeth of a 16-year-old has seen how incredibly white the teeth get and how fast they get white. But even if you use a system that doesn't oxygenate

Continued on p. 52

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as deeply as Kor, you have still done a decent job of at least oxygenating the surface enamel.

So when you have patients who've already whitened and therefore have, to one degree or another, cleansed (conditioned) teeth, and when they eat and drink staining stuff like coffee, tea and red wine, those stains will get on the surface and also get a little into the enamel. But since the enamel has already been cleansed, those stains have not (yet) become dense in the enamel. Because of that, when you use your whitening pen, and when the peroxide is forced to break down instantly to water and molecular oxygen, even this molecular oxygen bubbling will break down those new stains and remove them. So it is my opinion that the benefit to whitening pens is in maintenance of teeth that have already been whitened.

These whitening pens tend to be very much a commodity. They are manufactured in large quantities and stored unrefrigerated. They're shipped here and there in hot freight trucks. They're stored in warm or hot warehouses.

If they're made of hydrogen peroxide, they are the most susceptible to breakdown from temperature. So by the time they're used, they are not even close to being their original strength and effectiveness. But worse yet is that remember that as hydrogen peroxide breaks down, it will throw off those hydrogen ions and become very acidic. So really what the patients are doing is etching their teeth to one degree or another, every time they use the pen.

Some say that using hydrogen peroxide in the pens is a good thing (but they are wrong), because it breaks down so quickly on the teeth, making them more effective. Sounds good, but it's not true.

Carbamide peroxide is better in the pens, for several reasons. Carbamide peroxide breaks down more slowly than hydrogen peroxide. When in a pen, and mixing directly with the saliva on the tooth, it will still break down instantly. So it's a moot point.

Consider that prior to use, being carbamide peroxide, it has a better shelf life and doesn't become as broken-down and acidic as hydrogen peroxide would.

Then again, manufacturers of whitening gels know that peroxides of all types will break down if not refrigerated, and especially with whitening pens, they know that these tend to be stored for longer and in hotter conditions, so they will tend to put "acidifiers" in the gel in the first place, to make them more acidic. This is one of the two methods of chemical stabilization of whitening gels.

So what's the answer? If you're going to suggest whitening pens for your patients, it should be as a frequent maintenance of teeth that have already been whitened. Make sure to have them use a pen that is carbamide peroxide instead of hydrogen peroxide. And get your pens from one of the high-quality professional whitening companies out there.

Be really careful of even the high-priced whitening pens offered by cosmetic companies, etc. This is one of those cases where you would not get what you pay for. ■

2/3/2013

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