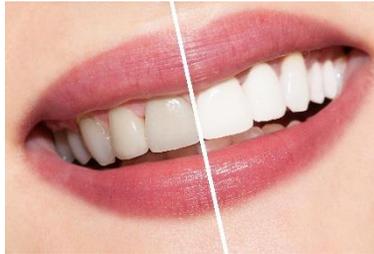


The College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba's Practice Guideline for Vital Tooth Whitening



Practice Guideline

Current research supports the safety and efficacy of most tooth whitening procedures, while at the same time identifies a risk of adverse effects on the oral tissues. There are many types of whitening products available today, including professionally applied gels, light or heat activated gels, and over-the-counter whitening agents. The risk of adverse effects increases when used with inadequate knowledge of the product and/or procedure. Hence, professional application and monitoring ensure the best and safest results. Health Canada classifies tooth whitening products as cosmetic, therefore, any person can perform tooth whitening procedures in any setting.

Dental hygienists have the opportunity to provide safe and effective tooth whitening to the public, as well as a legal obligation to follow The Dental Hygienists' Act. Under to subsection 30(2) of the Dental Hygienist Regulation, every member of the College of Dental Hygienists of Manitoba (CDHM) must follow the CDHM Practice Standards and Practice Competencies in all activities and settings.

There is not sufficient evidence to support the safety and efficacy of lasers for tooth whitening. Therefore laser use in tooth whitening is prohibited.

Dental hygienists must have the appropriate education to perform in-office and take home whitening procedures. As per the CDHM Practice Standards, the dental hygienist will use the Assessment, Diagnosis, Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADPIE) process of care, including using the most current evidence-based research, abiding by the manufacturer's instructions, educating the patient on all risks and benefits of treatment, and consulting with the client's dentist to ensure the treatment is in agreement with the client's overall oral health treatment plan.

Legislative Reference

As stated on pages 11 & 12 of the College of Dental Hygienist of Manitoba Competencies 2007:

The Dental Hygienist:

#51: applies knowledge of whitening techniques and related products.

#52: fabricates whitening trays.

#56: applies principles of risk management for client health and safety (eg. Universal precautions, considering latex allergies, etc.).

#64: uses materials and equipment according to manufacturer's specifications.

This Practice Guideline reflects current knowledge and is subject to periodic review and revisions with on-going research.