

Philips Zoom

Professional Whitening:

Giving your clients the whiter smile they've been dreaming of

Chances are someone has referred to you affectionately as ‘the tooth fairy’ but don’t be afraid to work your magic.

According to recent surveys commissioned by Philips Zoom in partnership with the **Canadian Dental Hygienists Association** (CDHA) it was found that 70 per cent of dental hygienists surveyed believed whitening is important to client overall confidence and satisfaction. It was also found that almost 60 per cent of Canadians surveyed believe an attractive smile is important to their overall confidence.

Interest in whitening among Canadians is high, with many survey participants having undergone some form of whitening (37 per cent had used over-the counter products; 10 per cent had undergone in-office professional whitening; 8 per cent who had used professional take-home whitening products).

Given the perceived importance of the appearance of one’s smile and Canadians interest in whitening, it’s surprising that only 23 per cent of dental hygienists surveyed took a proactive approach in discussing whitening with clients. Perhaps part of the barrier to proactively addressing whitening is that one in three dental hygienists report not feeling fully equipped to discuss all the whitening options available with clients.

When it comes to whitening, dental professionals are cited by Canadians as the biggest influencer for pursuing whitening treatments. Receiving a recommendation from a dental professional was found to be the biggest motivator for clients pursuing professional whitening treatment as reported by nearly half of those who pursued treatment.

CDHA recommends that you have an evaluation by a dental hygienist before using any whitening product. They can recommend whitening products which will best meet your individual needs.

Jo-Anne Jones, President of practice management and clinical training company RDH Connection Inc., is dedicated to excellence in dental team training and has the following advice for dental hygienists when it comes to client assessment for whitening:

- **Your Client’s Smile is a Conversation Starter** – Simply asking your clients how they feel about their smile starts a conversation. that can lead to better health for your clients. Part of this conversation should include the benefits of professional whitening versus over-the-counter or other options.
- **Don’t Pigeon-Hole Clients** – Older clients are often as enthusiastic, if not more, than younger clients about improving their smiles. The same can be said for male clients. There are a variety of options available that can be customized to suit a client needs and lifestyle. These options could include Zoom In-Office Whitening Treatments, take-home treatments or a touch-up pen.
- **Tackle the Sensitivity Issue Head On** – Some clients might want a whiter smile but worry about sensitivity. Fear of sensitivity becomes a bigger issue than any real sensitivity. Explaining the benefits of the new technology and formula whitening products, as well as the effectiveness of sensitivity management practices like Fluoridex Daily Defense Toothpaste before and after whitening to de-sensitize, skipping days between at-home treatments if necessary, and using lower light intensity treatments; all give dental professionals and clients much more control over any sensitivity and maintain comfort. The key is to identify sensitivity prior to whitening and treating proactively.
- **Consider the Client from a Holistic Wellness Perspective** – Today, clients need their dental professionals to build comprehensive oral health plans for them, understanding the role of a healthy, beautiful smile in their clients’ overall sense of confidence and well-being.

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