

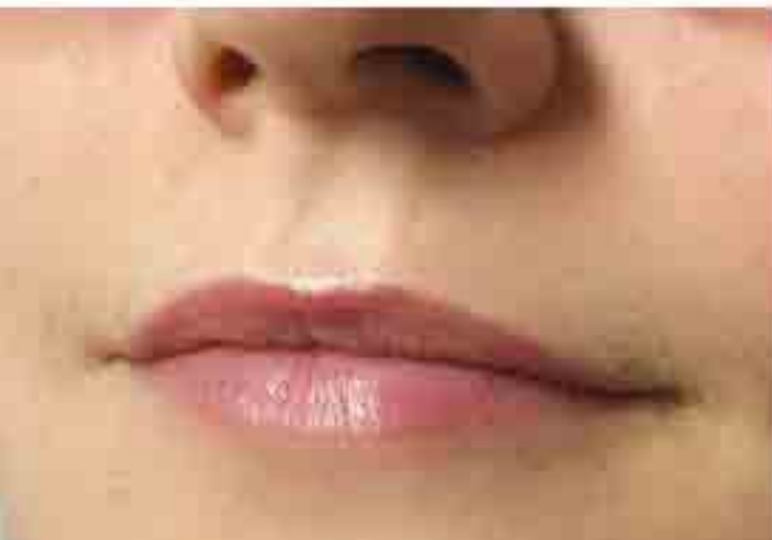


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DENTAL HEALTH

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THE CARIES
PROCESS
AND THE
IMPORTANCE OF
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DENTAL
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FINGERTIPS

PROBIOTIC
SUPPLEMENTS:
REDUCING THE
SIDE EFFECTS
FROM ANTIBIOTICS

TOP TIP...

HOW TO TAKE AN ACCURATE ALGINATE IMPRESSION FIRST TIME!

Diane Rochford

Home whitening with custom made trays is the most cost effective, safe and efficient technique for patients to whiten their teeth. The success of the treatment is often determined by the whitening trays.

An ideal tooth whitening tray should:

- Fit comfortably
- Have good retention
- Not irritate the soft tissues, gingivae, mucosa, tongue or teeth
- Not impinge on the papillae
- Fit easily and easily be removed

To achieve these features, an excellent alginate impression which accurately reproduces the surfaces of the upper and lower teeth must be taken.

There are many different techniques taught and developed over time by clinicians, these additional tips may help to improve and ensure consistently good results.

Patient management

Reassure an anxious patient by explaining the procedure calmly and with confidence. Allow them the opportunity to ask questions.



ACCEPTABLE LOWER ALGINATE IMPRESSION

Visibility and accessibility

To achieve an acceptable impression first time, position the dental chair so that maximum visibility and accessibility is achievable. This may mean reclining the chair or adjusting your stance, such as standing in front of the patient or directly behind.

Examine the oral cavity

Examine the soft tissues, teeth and general anatomy of the oral cavity. Assessing the height of the palate and width of the arches ensures the correct size of tray is selected.

Tray selection

Choosing the correct size of tray allows for a more accurate impression and reduces the chances of re-takes being required. Do not be fooled by the patient who says they only have a small mouth!

The tray should be wide enough to allow for a good thickness of alginate on the lingual/palatal and buccal surfaces and long enough to cover over the tuberosity (maxilla) and retro molar pad (mandible).

Success is in the mix!

Follow the basic steps, ensure the alginate powder and water are accurately measured. Mix the alginate quickly and efficiently to create a smooth creamy consistency.

Loading the tray

The alginate does not have to cover the palate on the upper tray, a horseshoe application is acceptable.

Dry the teeth

Air dry the teeth with a 3in1 to remove any debris or saliva. Be careful not to over dry the teeth as the alginate can stick or tear easily when removed.

Distract the patient

Distracting the patient is a good way to help prevent gagging. Encourage the patient to breath slowly through their nose or wiggle their toes. Working the lip over the alginate (see creating borders), is also a good distractor. Mixing the alginate, a little thicker and not over loading the trays especially the upper tray, can also help.

Reducing air bubbles

Ask the patient to rinse with a mixture of water and mouthwash - elimination of salivary mucins lowers the surface tension.



ACCEPTABLE UPPER ALGINATE IMPRESSION

Gather excess alginate onto the spatula (after loading the tray) and rub a small amount on the occlusal surfaces before seating the tray.

Creating borders

Using the excess alginate on the spatula (after loading the tray) add extra alginate into the vestibules especially anteriorly before seating the tray. Some clinicians prefer to add the extra alginate after seating the tray. Lift the lip over the alginate and keep working the alginate into the vestibules until the alginate is set.

The most important ‘top tip’ is to keep practising, developing the skills and good clinical judgement of what is an acceptable and not acceptable impression. Do not be afraid to repeat the impression, show the patient and explain the reasons why a re-take is necessary. The technician making the whitening trays will be thankful, as will the patient when they have a lighter and brighter smile.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Diane is an active member of the BSDHT, a Gold Member of the British Dental Bleaching Society, and a member of the BSP. She presents nationally and internationally. Since 2008, Diane has been teaching with Dr. Greenwall on her dental bleaching courses in the UK and overseas, and now runs her own courses specifically for dental hygienists and therapists covering all aspects of dental bleaching.

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