

Communicating Shade with Digital Photography

Digital photography is an excellent way to communicate key shade information to the lab. While exact shade comparisons cannot be made, photographs are very helpful with characterizations and texture. Taking accurate digital pictures can mean the difference between an average case and a great case.

Preliminary Recommendations:

- Always take photos of teeth before any prepping or impressions, as these procedures dehydrate the teeth.
- Stump shade for all-ceramic restorations should be taken immediately following prepping, so the dentin is not dehydrated.
- Wait one week post bleaching before taking photo for final shade.
- Take photos with patient in upright position. Taking pictures with patient reclined changes the lighting and shade perception.
- Remove all traces of lipstick.
- Use a neutral color bib if possible - grey, light blue or white.
- Do not "tuck" shade tab under lip. It is important to see both teeth and shade tabs in their entirety.



Basic tips for taking successful images:

- Use diffused soft light, preferably natural or color corrective, that illuminates teeth well to capture the translucency, depth and texture.
- Photograph the patient's natural teeth with shade tabs for an accurate comparison to the natural teeth. Make sure that tab shade marker can be identified.
- Hold the camera away from the patient's teeth and zoom in vs. placing the lens almost on the teeth.
- Remove any unnecessary or distracting equipment or tools from the area being photographed to allow for a clear unobstructed view of the patients natural teeth.

For complex cases photographs are invaluable, the more information you provide to us at the laboratory, the more accurate our restoration will be.

Pre-Operative Photographs

- Full face - the patient's entire face should fill the frame, and they should be giving a full smile.
- Full smile (unretracted) –close up of full smile. (It is important to capture a full smile to properly evaluate upper-lip hypermobility.)
- Full smile (retracted) - this gives the ceramist additional information on the cervical one-third of teeth, emergence angles, and periodontium that may not have been visible in an unretracted smile view.
- Close-up views (retracted) - taken from straight-on, inferior, and superior angles to the facial surface to bounce the flash around and give the ceramist the ability to visualize the entire labial.
- Black background shots (retracted) – a black background placed behind (palatal) the teeth to be photographed, will allow the technician to see incisal translucency, internal characterization, and mammelon effects very clearly.

Photos can easily be emailed to the lab at cdt@cdtsmiles.com or sent with the case. Quality digital images of the patients' pre-operative and prepared condition will allow us to create a highly detailed restoration that is difficult to distinguish from its natural counterpart. Thank you for placing your trust in CDT.