



Custom Shade Guide for Dental Restorations

Preparation Before Shade Selection

1. Schedule Smartly:

- Take shades **early in the day** if possible — natural teeth dehydrate and whiten over time.
- Avoid bright lipstick, makeup, or colored bibs that may reflect color onto teeth.

2. Clean Surface:

- Polish the teeth gently with pumice to remove stains or debris.
- Ensure the teeth are clean and moist — **dehydrated teeth appear lighter**.

3. Lighting Conditions:

- Use **natural daylight** or full-spectrum lighting.
- Avoid strong operatory lights (turn them off or to the side).
- Use a neutral-colored background (gray bib, no colorful clothing).

Shade Taking Process

1. Start With a Shade Guide:

- Use a standard guide like **VITA Classical A1-D4** or **VITA 3D Master**.
- Hold the tab **parallel to the tooth** being matched.

2. Quick Visual Check (5–7 seconds):

- Don't stare too long—your eyes can become desensitized.

- Blink or look at a blue/gray card briefly between comparisons.
3. **Take Multiple Zones (For Anterior):**
- **Cervical third** (gingival) — often more opaque or darker.
 - **Middle third** — most representative.
 - **Incisal third** — often more translucent or bluish.
4. **Record Details:**
- Base shade.
 - Characterization: white spots, craze lines, translucency, halos.
 - Surface texture: glossy, matte, mamelons.
 - Use diagrams or digital shade mapping.
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Photography Tips

1. **Use a DSLR or High-Quality Smartphone:**
- Use a macro lens if possible.
 - Always include a shade tab **in the same plane** as the tooth.
 - Take at least 3 angles: straight-on, 45° left, 45° right.
2. **Lighting:**
- Use ring flash or dual diffused light source.
 - Avoid harsh shadows or overexposed images.
3. **Background:**
- Use a neutral gray background to avoid color distortion.
4. **File Format:**
- Send full-resolution JPEGs, no filters or edits.
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Additional Info for the Lab

- Patient's age and gender (helps with natural translucency and characterization).

- Tooth preparation color (stump shade if applicable).
- Restoration type: monolithic, layered, zirconia, lithium disilicate, etc.
- Desired final appearance: warm vs. cool, vibrant vs. subdued.