



D&S Tips for Taking a Shade

1. Employ the use of at least two shade guides. Make sure the shade guides correspond with the porcelain being used by the laboratory. Most try to match to Vita Lumin Shade Guide. If in doubt, send the shade tab you desire to match to.
2. Take the shade under a variety of natural and artificial light sources. If in doubt, ask the patient under what light do they most commonly work or under what light do they desire the closest match.
3. Use a neutral gray card behind the teeth to reduce environmental effects. Reduce surrounding visual stimuli in the room. Cover the patient's clothing around the neck area with a bib, preferably light blue. Remove lipstick.
4. Solicit shade analysis from younger dental team members and/or obtain input from the patient (before tooth preparation).
5. To prevent sensory eye fatigue, glance at the shade for less than 5 seconds. Look at something neutral gray or blue to rest the retinal cones in the eye. Consider the first color match to usually be the best.
6. Take the shade before preparing the tooth for a restoration. Air from the handpiece and air syringe dries out the tooth resulting in a lighter value and less translucency.
7. Some shade takers prefer to first determine the value range of the shade. If in doubt, go lighter rather than darker (it is easier to darken a too-light shade with stains). Evaluate for the degree and location of enamel translucency (opalescence).
8. Second, match the hue, or the dominant color, as well as the chroma, or saturation of this color. Hue, the dentinal color, is best determined in the middle third of the tooth.
9. Verify the correct shade under various inclination to decrease mirror reflection which will affect the value. Again, verify shade under different lights.
10. Understand the tooth preparation is critical in achieving a proper shade. The shade guide tabs are 4-5 mm thick. The thicker the actual porcelain can be, the truer the shade will be to the tab.
11. Consider the metal substructure. Silver may decrease value, whereas gold adds a more yellow hue.
12. To decrease darkening at the cervical third from a metal collar, consider a porcelain margin (prepare a shoulder finish please).
13. Crown contour is equally important. A crown placed facially will appear lighter and vice versa. Also, provide a good impression of adjacent teeth to match labial texture.
14. On the prescription form, include diagrams and drawing defining shade locations, and the location and degree of incisal translucency. Also, note any special characterizations, such as craze lines, hypoplastic opacities, etc.
15. If in doubt, send your patient to us for a custom shade evaluation. Our skilled technicians can create a patient-approved match which will make everyone smile!

Contact us at 800.236.3859 or 608.849.5343.