

Return of the pearly whites

Just when Mrs. Guinea Pig was wondering how to look younger for those looming holiday parties — and without needles, scalpels or major medical bills — “smile specialists” Drs. Debra and Steven Glassman invited her over for a Zoom! teeth-whitening treatment. They promised that unlike those do-it-yourself over-the-counter kits, this industrial-strength bleaching agent would turn even her dingy, ratty-looking choppers a youthful eight to 10 shades lighter in one hour. Along with restoring her pearly whites, Zoom! also would eliminate Mrs. P’s decay-causing plaque.

The combination of vanity and health soon had Mrs. Guinea Pig paws-up in a comfortable vibrat-



**Fearless
Phyllis, G.P.**

ing recliner. After Dr. Debbie’s quick exam and a “before” photo, a technician propped open the patient’s mouth with a plastic device, screened her beady eyes, protected her gums and lips, applied the Zoom! and turned on the special halogen light that activates the hydrogen peroxide product.

Mrs. Pig watched a Larry David DVD — hard to laugh with mouth held open — during the 20-minute intervals between three applications of Zoom! An hour later, she had a radiant smile that hadn’t been seen since, well, never mind.

Scuttling down the hall to Dr. Debbie’s office, Guinea Pig learned that along with Father Time, the ma-

lor causes of a darkened, discolored smile include coffee, tea, red wine and marinara sauce — all verboten for the next 48 hours. The doctor said that keeping her incisors sparkling would require an at-home “touch-up” treatment once a month. Although FDA-approved Zoom! is considered very safe, it’s not for pregnant or nursing women, children under 13 or some people with highly sensitive teeth.

With holiday shopping to do, not every rodent has \$500 to spend on the intensive Zoom! office treatment. Patients willing to do-it-themselves at home for 30 minutes daily over two weeks can use professional-quality whiteners that give comparable results for \$250, and other treatments start at \$75. This is not your grand-guinea’s dentistry, as Dr. Debbie says. “There are many ways to have that white smile that makes you feel better about yourself.”