

# Mouth Care Advice

## Mouth care: A smile for life

Good oral health can have a huge effect on your quality of life. As well as making an important contribution to your general health it can ensure that you can eat what you want without discomfort, speak and socialise confidently, and smile with comfort.

## Get checked out!

A regular dental check-up is important whether you have your own teeth or not. It lets your dentist see if you have any dental problems and helps you to keep your mouth healthy. It is best to prevent problems or treat them early on leaving them could mean that treatment is more difficult in the future. At each check-up your dentist should:

- Examine your teeth, gums and mouth.
- Ask about your general health and any problems you have had since your last visit.
- Ask about and give advice on your diet, tobacco and alcohol use, medications and teeth cleaning habits.
- Discuss with you a date for your next routine visit. This could be as short as 3 months or as long as 2 years depending on your oral health.

Dental treatment is not free for everyone - so make sure you ask about the cost of any treatment. NHS treatment is cheaper than private treatment. Some people may be entitled to help with the cost of treatment, contact the British Dental Health Foundation for more information.

## Useful contacts

### NHS Choices

NHS Direct can help you find a local dental practitioner.

[Visit their website](#)

### Oral Health Foundation

The Oral Health Foundation provides leaflets on oral health and runs a confidential telephone helpline for members of the public.

Helpline: 01788 546 365

[Visit their website](#)

## Community Dental Service

The Community Dental Service can help clients who need a dentist to visit them at home, or who need more time than a high street dentist may be able to provide.

You can contact them through NHS Waltham Forest.

## Your healthy mouth

Looking after your mouth, whether you have your own teeth or wear dentures is an important part of your personal hygiene. This page will give you some hints and tips on how to look after your mouth, gums and teeth or dentures to ensure your mouth stays healthy.

### Get brushing!

You should brush your teeth thoroughly at least once a day with fluoride toothpaste to help prevent tooth decay and gum disease. A soft to medium bristle toothbrush is best - make sure you replace it when the bristles get out of shape.

If you have mobility difficulties, you may find it difficult to brush your own teeth - don't be embarrassed to ask for assistance. There are also numerous oral hygiene aids that can be very helpful; such as electric toothbrushes and specially designed brushes with flexi-grip handles if you have problems holding a standard toothbrush. Fluoride gels and mouthwashes can be excellent supplements to brushing, helping in the prevention of dental disease.

### Dealing with dentures

Like natural teeth, dentures must be looked after if they are going to last. Dentures should fit well and be comfortable. Whether you have complete or partial dentures you should:

- Brush gums, tongue and palate regularly with a soft bristle brush.
- See a dentist for regular check-ups.
- Brush your dentures daily to remove food deposits and plaque.
- Use a specialist denture cleaner or soap and water.

Ideally, dentures should be left out of your mouth for between 4 and 8 hours every 24 hours. Dentures can break, chip or crack, or you could simply grow out of them as the shape of your mouth changes. Be aware of this, and consult a dentist if you have any problems. Repairs to dentures are free under the NHS.

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