

Q Will I need any extra treatment?

A Your dentist may also refer you to a dental hygienist for extra treatment, thorough cleaning and to keep a closer check on the health of your mouth. Your dental hygienist will be able to advise you on how often you should visit them, although this should usually be every 3 to 6 months.



The Oral Health Foundation is an independent charity dedicated to promoting good oral health.

The Oral Health Foundation promotes three key messages:

1 Brush your teeth last thing at night and at least one other time during the day, with fluoride toothpaste

2 Cut down how much and how often you have sugary foods and drinks

3 Visit your dentist regularly, as often as they recommend

The Dental Helpline is a confidential and independent advice service. Call from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, or you can email from their website: www.dentalhealth.org

Wessex House
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Q How can smoking affect the health of my mouth?

A Most people are now aware that smoking is bad for their health. It can cause many different medical problems and, in some cases, fatal diseases. However, many people don't realise the damage that smoking does to their mouth, gums and teeth. Smoking can lead to tooth staining, gum disease, tooth loss and in more severe cases, mouth cancer.



Q Why are my teeth stained?

A One of the effects of smoking is staining of the teeth due to the nicotine and tar in the tobacco. It can make your teeth yellow in a very short time, and heavy smokers often complain that their teeth are almost brown after years of smoking.

Q How will smoking affect my gums and teeth?

A Smoking can also lead to gum disease. People who smoke are more likely to produce bacterial plaque, which leads to gum disease. The gums are affected because smoking causes a lack of oxygen in the bloodstream, so the infected gums don't heal. Smoking causes people to have more dental plaque and causes gum disease to progress faster than non-smokers. Gum disease is still the most common cause of tooth loss in adults.

Q How is smoking linked with cancer?

A Most people know that smoking can cause lung and throat cancer, but many people still don't know that it is the main cause of mouth cancer. Every year thousands of people die from mouth cancer brought on by smoking.

Q Are there special dental products I can use?

A There are special toothpastes for people who smoke. They are sometimes a little more abrasive than ordinary toothpastes and you should use them with care. Your dental team may recommend that you use these toothpastes alternately with your usual toothpaste. There are several 'whitening' toothpastes on the market. Although they do not affect the natural colour of your teeth, they may be effective in removing some stains.

Q What about mouthwashes?

A People who smoke may find they are more likely to have bad breath than non-smokers. Fresh-breath products such as mouthwashes may help disguise the problem in short term, but will not cure it. It is important to use these at separate times to brushing as it washes all of the toothpaste off the teeth which has the important ingredients in.



Q How often should I visit the dentist?

A It is important that you visit your dental team regularly for a normal check up and a full mouth examination so that any other condition can be spotted early.

You should visit your dental team regularly, as often as they recommend. People who smoke are more likely to have stained teeth, and therefore may need appointments more often with the dental hygienist.

Q What can my dental team do for me?

A Your dentist will carry out a regular examination to make sure that your teeth and gums and whole mouth are healthy. Your dentist will also examine your cheeks, tongue and throat for any signs of other conditions that may need further investigation.