

Does vomiting affect my oral health?

Yes. The acid in the vomit will cause the enamel to weaken. It is important that you do not brush your teeth straight after vomiting. You can either use a fluoride mouthwash, chew sugar-free gum, or have a drink of water to help to neutralise this acid.



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
Dental Practice



WESSEX HOUSE
DENTAL PRACTICE

Drugs, Alcohol & Oral
Health

Westbury
Sherborne
Dorset
DT9 3EH
www.wessex.house
01935 817 950

reception@wessexhousedental.com

Can using drugs affect my teeth and oral health?

Yes. The use of illegal drugs, such as Methamphetamine (meth, speed, ice, glass and crystal), Heroin, Cocaine, Cannabis and Ecstasy can all have an adverse effect on the health of your teeth and gums.

How do drugs affect my dental health?

Many drugs can cause a craving for sugar, such as sweets and fizzy drinks, which can cause tooth decay.

Drugs such as Methamphetamine and Heroin can also cause you to have a dry mouth. Because there is a reduced saliva flow in the mouth, this can also lead to tooth decay and gum disease. Some drugs, such as Ecstasy and Cocaine can lead to jaw-clenching and tooth grinding. This can result in cracked or broken teeth, as well as headaches and jaw pain.

Being 'high' on drugs could also make you less likely to remember to brush your teeth regularly. This could lead to gum disease, dental decay and tooth loss.



Does drinking alcohol affect my teeth and gums?

Alcoholic drinks such as white wine, beer and cider can be very acidic. This will cause erosion of the enamel on your teeth, possibly leading to pain and sensitivity.

Spirits such as vodka and whiskey are very high in alcohol and will give you dry mouth.

Many mixers and alcopops are high in sugar. This can cause dental decay.

How does this happen?

When you eat or drink anything acidic, your teeth come under an 'acid attack' for up to one hour. During this time, your enamel is weakened and your saliva is working to return the mouth to a neutral pH level. Because drugs reduce the amount of saliva you produce, this process will take much longer than usual and your teeth could be under attack for long periods of time.

When you eat or drink anything that contains sugar, it reacts with the plaque in your mouth and produces plaque acids. It is these acids that attack our teeth and cause dental decay.

How can I help prevent the problems caused by drugs and alcohol?

A good oral hygiene routine at home can partly help to reduce the damage caused by taking drugs and drinking alcohol.

However, reducing or stopping these bad habits would be the best long-term solution for your overall health and the health of your teeth and gums.

How can I look after my oral health?

You should brush your teeth last thing at night and at least one other time during the day, using a fluoride toothpaste that contains between 1350-1500 ppm (parts per million) fluoride.

You should not brush your teeth for one hour after you have eaten or drunk anything. If you brush your teeth before this time, you might brush away small particles of softened enamel, which can lead to dental erosion.

Cleaning in-between your teeth with interdental brushes, tape or floss will help to prevent any plaque or debris from building-up and reduce the risk of decay and gum disease.

If you want to use a mouthwash, this can be very useful. However, do not use the mouthwash within one hour of brushing your teeth. This will wash away the fluoride from the toothpaste and leave your teeth at risk of tooth decay. Mouthwash should not replace regular tooth brushing.

To help reduce tooth decay, cut down on how often you have sugary foods and drinks.

If your dentist believes that you are at a high risk of dental decay, due to either drugs, alcohol or a sugary diet, they may prescribe a high-fluoride toothpaste for you to use to help to protect the teeth.