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Three prevention policies that can improve the nation's oral health

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New research from Frontier Economics has estimated cost savings to the NHS and patients of rolling out three policies to prevent tooth decay.

Introducing these three preventative policies could see:

- 1.43m fewer tooth extractions;
- 1.8m fewer fillings; and
- Over 265,000 fewer root canal treatments every year.

They could also save NHS dentistry £51m and NHS dental patients almost £100m annually.

1. Water fluoridation

Fluoride can be added to drinking water to improve oral health by protecting people from tooth decay.

Rolling out water fluoridation to the 90% of the population who are not already covered in England and Wales could lead 1.2m fewer tooth extractions each year.

2. Sugar free chewing gum

Evidence suggests chewing sugar-free gum (containing sorbitol or xylitol) two-to-three times a day can lower the risk of tooth decay.

If most people did this, there could be an estimated 109,430 fewer tooth extractions, 182,383 fewer fillings and 36,477 fewer root canal treatments carried out on the NHS every year.

3. Supervised toothbrushing

Supervised toothbrushing programmes should be used in schools or nurseries, to improve the oral health of younger children.

Supervised toothbrushing programme targeted at children aged between three and six living in the poorest 20% of areas, would save the NHS £8m a year.

