



WORD OF MOUTH

MAGAZINE



**Oral Health
Foundation**
Better oral health for all

ISSUE 93 | JUNE 2022 This month we continue to raise awareness about the importance of good oral health during National Smile Month. Our charity campaign is all about highlighting the importance of a healthy mouth.

Editor's Welcome

Hello and welcome to the latest issue of Word of Mouth – the Oral Health Foundation’s digital magazine. This edition is dedicated to all things National Smile Month – our charity campaign that has been putting a smile on thousands of faces over the last month.

During National Smile Month we have been championing the benefits of a healthy mouth and promoting the value of good oral health. The charity campaign is all about making a positive difference to the quality of people’s lives by helping them to improve their oral health.

For many people, looking after their smile is often simple, but for some it is anything but. Every year, millions of people are affected by oral health problems. They can affect relationships, careers, and day-to-day life. Oral disease often leaves people in extreme pain and can also be life-threatening.

That’s why, National Smile Month 2022 has been shining a light on inequalities within oral health.

Inequalities are often preventable. They are always unfair.

Some of the articles in this issue highlight some of these injustices. We also have some great oral health advice about brushing, nutrition and saving money with your oral health.

For those who’ve already got involved in National Smile Month I’d like to say a big thank you. Every year we are bowled over by the enthusiasm and creativity of our fantastic supporters, without whom the campaign would not be where it is today. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



David Arnold
Editor, Word of Mouth

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National

Smile Month

Over the last four weeks National Smile Month has been championing the benefits of having good oral health and promoting the value of a healthy smile.

The charity campaign has been raising awareness of important health issues and putting a smile on everybody's face.

During this year's National Smile Month, the Oral Health Foundation have also been shining a light on inequalities within oral health.

Millions of people every year are affected by oral health problems. Oral diseases can leave you in extreme pain and affect your quality of life. Sadly, oral diseases may also be life-threatening.

Oral health inequalities affect lots of different people and groups within society. Your age, wealth, level of education and where you live can all determine how healthy, or unhealthy, your mouth might be.

Inequalities are often preventable. They are also unfair and unjust.

Throughout the campaign, National Smile Month has been looking at different areas within oral health inequalities,

addressing and tackling a number of important issues.

The life of a smile

The smile is one of your greatest assets. It helps you to communicate your thoughts and emotions, and gives you extra confidence in your relationships, social life and career. Your mouth is also important for speaking, eating and drinking and breathing.

Because of this, it makes sense to give your smile (and your mouth) the best care possible.

Looking after your smile throughout all stages of life is really important and can improve your quality of life.

Whether you are a younger person, adult, or older person, keeping your mouth healthy can be easy – if you know how.

During National Smile Month, we have been helping people of all ages keep by publishing lots of resources about how your smile changes through life and what you might need to do at each stage to keep on top of it.

A healthy mouth is affordable

Many people can struggle to

maintain their oral health due to financial difficulties.

Research by the Oral Health Foundation shows more than one-in-three (36%) UK adults admit that they are sacrificing dental visits in order to keep their bank balance in check.

We have also found that younger adults are most likely to financially struggle with their oral health. Just under two-in-three (59%) 18-24-year-olds freely admit to their financial inability to look after their mouth, teeth and gums.

Whether it's replacing your toothbrush when the bristles become splayed, making sure you never run out of toothpaste or mouthwash, or keeping up with your regular dental visits – you don't have to break the bank to take care of your smile.

On the National Smile Month website, you will be able to pick up lots of tips to save money while keeping your oral health in top shape.

Nutrition

A healthy diet is good for your body. It is also great news for your smile. What you eat and how often you eat it can have a big impact on your oral health.

The four key steps to great oral health

- 1 Brush your teeth, last things at night and at one other time during the day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- 2 Cut down on how much sugar you have and how often you have it.
- 3 Clean in between your teeth every day with interdental brushes and use a fluoride mouthwash daily.
- 4 Visit the dentist regularly, as often as they recommend.

Discover more top tips for great oral health at www.dentalhealth.org

While a balanced diet packed with vitamins and minerals can yield positive effects, there are also foods and drinks you need to avoid.

One of the biggest dangers to your oral health is sugar. Sugar damages your teeth and causes tooth decay. Over time, this often leads to fillings or even tooth extractions.

The best ways you can avoid the harm caused by sugar is to limit the amount of sugar you eat or drink. It is also important to limit the number of times during the day that your mouth is exposed to sugar.

Use National Smile Month as the perfect platform to reduce the sugar in your diet. On the campaign website, you can find plenty of advice for low-in-sugar alternatives that are great for healthy teeth.



Oral health around the UK

The area you live can affect your mouth in a number of different ways.

Your region may or may not have fluoride added to the water supply, changing your odds of having tooth decay. Your town or city could determine how difficult it is to access dental care.

The cost of living, combined with differences in household income, may give you more challenges when it comes to affording products or services to look after your mouth. And if you

live in a rural area, geographical isolation could mean less support for your oral health.

As part of National Smile Month, we are committed to reducing inequalities in oral health.

During National Smile Month, we have been speaking to local groups and government to try and address these unjust imbalances in health.

Mouth, mind and body

There are strong findings that support something that health experts have suspected for a long time... infections in the mouth can be linked with problems in other parts of the body and the mind.

Diseases and conditions which may be caused or made worse by poor oral health include: heart disease, strokes, diabetes, giving birth to a premature or low-birth-weight baby, respiratory (lung) disease and dementia.

Most of these problems are linked to poor gum health, specifically severe gum disease, and the bacteria that lives in your mouth.

It means that having a healthy mouth could help you keep such disease at bay.

On the National Smile Month, you can learn all about preventing gum disease. You can find lots of tips about oral hygiene routines to stop gum infections and advice on what foods and drinks your gums will love (and hate).



The Great British Brushathon

Brushing your teeth is not usually considered a communal event. It's done in the privacy of your bathrooms, in the morning and last thing at night. Perhaps you'll open the door for your partner or children, but apart from that, your brushing routine is something not too many people see.

That is until National Smile Month comes around!



The Oral Health Foundation along with thousands of friends have celebrated the value of good oral health by taking part in The Great British Brushathon.

The event, which took place on Wednesday 15 June, connected people worldwide in one giant communal brushing event.

People of all ages flocked to social media to post photos and videos of themselves brushing their teeth, using the hashtag #GreatBritishBrushathon.

By sharing toothbrushing selfies (and videos), the charity hopes to promote the value of twice daily brushing and having a healthy smile.

In the UK, one-in-three people regularly forget to brush twice a day. Dr Nigel Carter OBE, CEO of the Oral Health Foundation says: "Brushing for at least two minutes last thing at night and in at least one other occasion with fluoride toothpaste is a really one of the best and simplest ways for you to look after your oral health.

"It brushes away the build-up of plaque which, if not removed, can cause tooth decay and gum disease. Over time, this can lead to tooth loss.

"It is important to remember to wait an hour after eating or drinking anything before brushing your teeth. This is because the acid formed when eating sugary foods and drinks softens the enamel, which can be brushed away, eventually leads to tooth erosion."

To mark this year's Great British Brushathon, here are the Oral Health Foundation's top toothbrushing tips....

- Brush your teeth last thing at night, before you go to bed. You should also brush them at one other point during the day.
- You should brush your teeth for two minutes. That's all it takes to brush your teeth effectively.
- Whether you use a manual or an electric toothbrush, it's important that you take the time to cover the surfaces of your teeth and all areas of your mouth.

- Only use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste, it's all your teeth need, and it avoids too much mess.
- Make sure your toothpaste has fluoride in it (between 1350-1500ppm). This is what protects you from tooth decay.
- Don't press your toothbrush flatly against your teeth, ideally you should brush towards your gum line at a 45-degree angle for the best clean.
- Spit don't rinse! It might be tempting to rinse out your mouth after brushing however if you spit instead, it allows the fluoride from your toothpaste to protect your teeth throughout the day!

For more great brushing advice, visit www.dentalhealth.org, or you can speak to one of the charity's experts by calling the Dental Helpline on 01788 539780.



National Smile Month hits **70,000 Smileys** and counting

More than 70,000 people have been given an extra reason to smile by receiving one of this year's National Smile Month Smileys.

A simple smile is often our most powerful possession, and a key part of National Smile Month is to help put smiles on everyone's faces.

With our Smiley, you'll find it impossible not to show your smile behind it. More than half a million of you have used them over the years. It's simple fun, and educational too.

Each Smiley carries our three key messages for good oral health:

- Brush your teeth last thing at night and on at least one other occasion with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Cut down on how much and how often you have sugary foods and drinks.
- Visit your dentist regularly, as often as they recommend.

Having a healthy smile is both physically and psychologically beneficial. It can boost your confidence, improve your appearance and even how we are perceived by other people. But it is not just enough to have a healthy smile. You must show it too.

have a positive and lifting effect on those around us.



Smiling has been shown to help improve mental health, not only helping to put ourselves in a better mood but also

The Smiley is a great opportunity to take a moment to think about your oral health, and more importantly share how it can be improved.

Thank you to all of you who have supported this year's National Smile Month with a Smiley. Here are just a few of the fantastic pictures we have been sent in....



The UK's oral health is a **postcode lottery** and in dire need of levelling up

Speaking on Monday at the launch of this year's National Smile Month, the Oral Health Foundation's chief executive, Dr Nigel Carter called for the government to put an end to the vast inequalities in oral health that are causing tens of thousands of people to suffer in pain.

Dr Carter has urged the government to focus on addressing critical problems with access to NHS dentistry and the need to train more dentists.

Dr Carter said: "Oral health varies around the UK – it is a postcode lottery. This isn't going to go away overnight as the dentists just aren't there. It does seem that there isn't a wish to address the problem and train more dentists.

"Whether that dentistry is being delivered on the NHS, or the private sector, it is not possible without an adequate workforce.



Every penny goes towards helping people achieve a healthy smile

Everybody deserves to have good oral health.

By donating to the Oral Health Foundation you are helping the most vulnerable people to achieve a healthier life through better oral health.

Every penny counts. Please donate today.

www.dentalhealth.org/donate



**Oral Health
Foundation**
Better oral health for all



“You really can’t achieve good health and wellbeing without good oral health. That’s why during National Smile Month, we are calling for a levelling up agenda so that everybody can achieve the standards of oral health that they really deserve.”

National Smile Month 2022 is all about tackling inequalities within oral health in the UK.

Under the theme of ‘Everyone deserves a healthy smile’, the charity’s campaign will be helping more people achieve a healthier life through better oral health. The Oral Health Foundation will be providing information and support for thousands of children and families, the elderly and vulnerable, people with disabilities and those living in deprivation or isolation.

Mhari Coxon, President of the Oral Health Foundation said: “This year is about shining a light on the millions of people that are affected by oral health problems such as tooth decay and gum disease.

“We want to support those who are vulnerable, elderly, disabled or those who, for whatever reason, can’t access education, the right dietary advice and because of social economic reasons don’t have access to oral care.

“Everyone deserves a healthy smile, and these

diseases are completely preventable.”

Tooth decay is one of the most common diseases in the UK. One-in-three (33%) adults have signs of tooth decay, as well as around one-in-four (24%) five-year-olds.

Those from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to suffer from tooth decay and be admitted to hospital because of it. Last week, it was revealed that 14,615 children in England had rotten teeth removed in hospital between 2020-21.

The Oral Health Foundation is campaigning to make healthier food and drink, that contains less sugar, more affordable for families on lower incomes. It is tragic to see the government decision this week to delay the ban on cheap offers on unhealthy foods. Far from helping in these times of inflation the move is likely to store up greater problems with both oral and general health and to cost both individuals and the country more in the future.

The charity also believes a nationwide water fluoridation programme will drastically cut rates of tooth decay, especially in children. Currently, only 11% of the population benefit from fluoride being added to their water supply. Research shows

that in fluoridated areas, the number of hospital admissions (for tooth decay) falls by between 45% and 68%.

Tooth decay and other oral diseases can have a negative impact throughout life and can cause pain, infection and lead to difficulties with eating, sleeping, socialising and wellbeing. Campaigners are extremely concerned that oral health has declined during the pandemic.

The charity has found over half (55%) of UK adults feel they have neglected their teeth during the various lockdowns. Around one-in-seven (15%) admit to not brushing their teeth as much as before the pandemic. One-in-five (20%) are eating healthier foods, and more than one-in-ten (11%) have been drinking more alcohol.

Professor Avijit Banerjee from Kings College London, speaking on behalf of the Wrigley Oral Healthcare Programme, one of the National Smile Month sponsors said: “The pandemic has highlighted the key issues in both oral and dental health care that we see daily in the news.

“We have access issues, social and demographic inequalities and of course, these impact on the quality of dental health which has declined over the past two years.

“We need to move away from just treating diseases to preventing them. We need to bring back the national health service, as opposed to a national illness service or a national treatment service. We need to innovate in the way we change behaviour and engage with the public on prevention.

“Behaviour change is available if we are willing to think outside the box. I was privileged to lead a fantastic research team at Kings College London over the last four years looking at the health benefits of chewing gum. We found that chewing sugar-free gum reduces plaque and decay.”

Health leaders are also keen to raise awareness about how the health of your mouth has a direct link to the health of your body.

Studies have shown that poor oral health, specifically severe gum disease, can lead to increased risk of heart disease, strokes, diabetes, dementia and poor pregnancy outcomes.

Professor Iain Chapple from Birmingham University, speaking on behalf of Johnson&Johnson, the makers of LISTERINE® Ltd and sponsors of the Month said: “Both tooth decay and periodontitis (severe gum disease) are the most common human diseases responsible for more years lost to disability than any other human condition, and the links to systemic diseases are well established.

“There is a desperate need for public health campaigns to raise awareness of this. It’s really tough to get public health messages in oral care funded nationally. We all need to start investing and getting those messages out there.

“Healthy gums don’t bleed. Effective toothbrushing and interdental cleaning is essential for keeping gums healthy. Mouthwashes containing fluoride (with more than 100ppm fluoride) that are clinically proven to reduce plaque/germs offer additional benefit.

Research shows that the single biggest reduction in gum disease occurs through the measures that patients can take at home.”

National Smile Month runs until 16 June and is supported by some of the most well-known brands in the UK, including Invisalign, Oral-B, GSK, Johnson&Johnson, the makers of LISTERINE® and Wrigley Oral Healthcare Programme.

Addressing oral health inequalities has never been more important to achieving **healthy smiles for the nation**

The Wrigley Oral Healthcare Programme tell us about the work they are doing to shine a light on oral health inequalities, and the crucial role prevention can play in supporting better oral health.

This year, the Wrigley Oral Healthcare Programme are delighted to support the Oral Health Foundation's National Smile Month campaign theme 'Everybody deserves a healthy smile'. This theme couldn't be more pertinent given the current challenges we face to address the impact of covid-19 on the nation's oral health.

The Wrigley Oral Healthcare Programme has spent the last year working to understand the oral health inequalities that exist across the country and to raise awareness of the importance of preventative interventions to stop these from being further exacerbated. Having been involved in National Smile Month for over a decade, we have seen how collaboration across the sector to educate people on the importance of looking after your oral health can have a positive impact.



This will continue to be essential as we recover from the impact of the pandemic on the sector and on the smiles of the nation.

Oral health inequalities

Research conducted by the Programme at the end of 2021 analysing Public Health England data found significant oral health disparities across the country. The research found that the England-wide

number of tooth extractions as a percentage of the population of 0-19-year-olds is 0.4% . At the point people require hospital extractions, they are likely to have progressed to very late stages of poor oral health.

Concerningly, some regions have significantly higher levels of extractions – Yorkshire and Humber have 75% higher levels of extractions and the North West and North East both experience 50% higher levels than the national average.

Covid-19 impact on dentistry and oral health

The impact of the pandemic on patients' oral health has been significant and despite the incredible efforts of the dental industry to resume services post-covid, workforce challenges and the backlog of appointments have created huge challenges for the profession. Over 35 million NHS dental appointments have been lost due to the pandemic and 80% of patients have found it difficult to access timely dental care.

New data published by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities shows that tooth extractions in children have more than halved during the pandemic. This is despite the level



Your mouth matters. The Oral Health Foundation is here for you.

We care about your oral health.

That's why, every year, we support thousands of people to help them achieve a healthier life through better oral health.

If you need help, or would simply like to support us in our mission, visit our website and get in touch.

www.dentalhealth.org

of demand remaining unchanged. This paints a concerning picture around the level of waiting times for dental care, with inequalities in oral health likely to be exacerbated as a result of this.

Prevention and oral health

Given the pressure on dental practices, preventative measures have never been more important. Brushing your teeth twice a day is crucial, as is using additional oral health tools like flossing. Preventative measures will play a crucial role in the coming years to support the dental industry in tackling the backlog, and education around prevention will be a key part of this.

Sugarfree gum as a preventative intervention

One of the tools people can use to support their dental hygiene and prevent cavities, alongside regular brushing and flossing, is using sugarfree gum when they're on the go and between meals. The oral care benefits of chewing sugarfree gum are widely recognised – a 2022 systematic review by King's College London demonstrated

sugarfree gum reduces the quantity of plaque in the oral cavity, providing a reason why the 2019 systematic review by King's College London established that chewing sugar-free gum reduced cavities by 28%.

Celebrating National Smile Month

By addressing oral health inequalities and educating the public on the important role of prevention, we believe that everyone can achieve the smile they deserve. The Programme supports the OHF's ambition to achieve this and is looking forward to promoting the important role of prevention over the course of National Smile Month.

For more information on the Wrigley Oral Healthcare Programme, or to view our news, evidence and resources, please visit wrigleyoralhealthcare.co.uk.



10 foods and drinks with surprising oral health benefits

What you eat and drink can have a big impact on the health of your mouth.

As part of National Smile Month, we've highlighted ten foods and drinks which you might not realise can help improve your oral health massively. Do you recognise any on this list?

Yogurt, milk and cheeses

Any type of healthy dairy product has calcium which will help strengthen your bones and teeth.

Yoghurts and cheese are ideal as they contain these vitamins and minerals, whilst also being soft for teeth that need extra care. Milk is also good for your teeth as it contains roughly the same nutrients and vitamins.



Spinach

Any dark, green vegetable in fact is good not only for your body but also for your teeth as well. While being well-known for levels of iron, it contains high levels of calcium that help to rebuild enamel, spinach is a great addition to any plate.

Others in this category can include but are not limited to kale and collard greens.

Almonds

Healthy snacks such as almonds can really help with several dental issues.

These are great for your teeth because they are a good source of calcium and protein while being low in sugar. Sugar can have an adverse effect on teeth by raising the acidity levels in the mouth and badly impacting the enamel.

Salmon

Salmon has long been considered a healthy food due to its low fat and high protein intake. Protein can help gums to revitalise as it is needed to repair damaged muscle tissue around the body. It also possesses vitamin D which helps the body to absorb calcium allowing for healthy teeth and bones.



Carrots

Carrots are good for a variety of reasons especially when eaten raw. Their crunchy texture can help clean your teeth acting as a natural toothbrush, you still need to brush your teeth properly remember. The chewing action helps to massage your gums and improve their health and blood circulation. Keratin and vitamin A are also present in this vegetable which can help repair tooth enamel.



Lean meat

Any type of lean meat such as chicken is good as a source of protein for your teeth and gums.

It is a great source of phosphorus, a type of nutritional mineral that helps bone production and remodelling. Without phosphorus, your

teeth could end up chipping very easily even if you have a large amount of calcium and vitamin D in your diet.

Celery

Celery is similar in how it can affect your mouth as carrots act as a natural toothbrush to an extent. It also has a great combination of vitamin K and calcium. Vitamin K aids in transporting calcium around the body. Celery can also help fight gum disease and increase saliva production, though be sure to check with your dentist about what is right for you.



Apples

Much like carrots discussed earlier in this article, they also can act as a natural toothbrush though this can be a lesser extent depending on the variety. As they also have low acidity levels unlike oranges, they could keep not only the doctor away but the dentist too!

Fruits such as oranges while being very healthy can impact your teeth by raising the levels of acidity in your mouth. Over a sustained period, this can wear down your enamel, hydrating with water regularly can help with this.



Green Tea/Black Tea

Drinking cups of green and black tea can help your dental health. This is because the drink lacks any sugar (provided you haven't added any) and can help keep saliva in your mouth while lowering its acidity. It can also help wash away dental plaque and reduce cavities, something that is great for anyone's mouth. Tea is also a natural source of fluoride which helps strengthen enamel.

Still Water

Last but certainly not least water is the best drink for your teeth as well as for hydrating your body. Over the course of the day bacteria can build up in your mouth and drinking water can help your saliva replenish and do its job of bringing your mouth to a normal PH level. As it isn't acidic, it has no chance whatsoever of damaging your teeth unlike other soft drinks.

5 top tips for the healthy mouth

Having good oral health is really important. A healthy smile doesn't only benefit your mouth. It also helps you achieve better physical health and mental wellbeing.

The good news is that a healthy mouth is easy to achieve.

Here are the Oral Health Foundation's top five tips for a healthy mouth...

Brushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste

Brushing for two minutes last thing at night and at one other time during the day with a fluoride toothpaste is key to maintaining good oral health.

Worryingly, one-in-three UK adults regularly forget to brush their teeth twice daily.

Daily brushing is important because it removes plaque. If the plaque isn't removed, it continues to build up, feeding on the bits of food left behind and causing tooth decay and gum disease.

Electric toothbrushes can remove up to twice as much plaque as a manual brush so that's a great option to give your mouth that extra good clean. Whether you use a manual or electric brush, remember to clean for a full two minutes and use a toothpaste with 1450ppm of fluoride – the key ingredient as it is what protects you from tooth decay.

Cleaning between your teeth daily

Brushing may come before flossing in the dictionary, but it shouldn't when it comes to our teeth. Research shows that interdental cleaning before brushing is the best way to clean our teeth effectively.

The action of cleaning in between our teeth, using interdental brushing, dental floss or water or air flossers, loosens bacteria and food debris from between our teeth. This allows brushing to be much more successful at removing plaque.

Studies show that those of us who interdentally clean before brushing are left with a much cleaner mouth than those who did it afterwards.

Using interdental brushes or flossing is a key part of any good oral health routine.



Cutting down on sugar

What you eat and drink can have a big impact on the health of your mouth.

The two things to look out for in your food and drink are sugar and acid. These have the potential to cause damage to your teeth.

Sugar reacts with the bacteria in plaque (the sticky coating on your teeth) and produces harmful acids. This is the cause of tooth decay.

Acidic foods and drinks can be just as harmful. The acid 'erodes' or dissolves the enamel, exposing the dentine underneath. This can make your teeth sensitive and unsightly.

A diet that is rich in vitamins, minerals and fresh fruit and vegetables can help to prevent gum disease. Gum disease can lead to tooth loss and cause bad breath.

Visiting dentist regularly

Visiting a dentist regularly, as often as they recommend, is one of the best steps you can take for the health of your mouth. The time between visits could be six months or two years, depending on when the dentist thinks is right for you.

Even if your teeth don't hurt, gums don't bleed and there is no evident sign of tooth decay, you still won't be able to judge whether the state of your mouth is completely healthy.

Dentists and the rest of the dental team can spot problems early – before they have a chance to develop into something more serious. It's definitely a case of better to be safe than sorry.

“

Brushing for at least two minutes last thing at night and in at least one other occasion with fluoride toothpaste is a really one of the best and simplest ways for you to look after your oral health.

Dr Nigel Carter, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation

Using mouthwash daily

You can provide a boost to your oral health by using a fluoride mouthwash as it helps to clear the mouth of debris. It can also help you stop plaque from building-up on our gums, in-between our teeth, and on the surface of our teeth in between brushing.

Mouthwash can help to freshen our breath by killing the bacteria associated with bad breath.

Use a fluoride mouthwash daily as a supplement to brushing twice daily, but not as a replacement.

Conclusion

Taking everything into account, you can see it is not that hard to maintain good oral health hygiene and it is realistic to keep up with it, forming a healthy routine.

By following these simple steps, you will not only make sure to keep your mouth pain-free and pretty but also save money on unnecessary dental treatments and precious time that could be spent on something rather useful.



Top money saving tips for your oral health

Finding out where to save money is not an easy task as there is so much variety on offer especially online and when confronted with supermarket

Your dentist will be able to tell you what type of toothpaste you need, however, if you prefer doing your own research and shopping around for better deals then we have some tips to point you in the right direction.

To help you along the way, here are our top money saving tips for your oral health...

Large supermarkets

Often a supermarket's own brand is much cheaper than big named brands.

If they have the right amount of fluoride which can be found on the packaging, they should be fine provided you do not have any specific needs. Always check the fluoride content is appropriate for all ages in your household, most family toothpaste will contain a minimum of 1350-1500 ppm which is typically fine for anyone over three years old.

If your dentist is concerned about the amount of fluoride for your children, then this can be discussed, and he will point you to a more suitable toothpaste for your children. It will take care of their teeth perfectly fine and save you a bit of money.

At the dentist

Sometimes a dentist will be able to get certain products such as toothbrushes and interdental brushes for a discount price compared to other shops.

One of the best things about buying at the dentist is they will be able to tell you exactly what you need, almost like a prescription when you go to the doctor.

This will mean you spend less money on products that you do not need while maintaining your standard of health in between dental visits. You could also take this opportunity to make the dentists a pleasant place for your children.

Buying them a toothbrush afterwards can be a treat for them and a way of positive reinforcement. This is especially true if they get to pick their own toothbrush.

Occasionally your dentist will also be able to give you vouchers for more expensive products, this will depend on the practice but it is always a good idea to ask. They may also be able to make you aware of any promotions that are going on currently if you are looking for a specific product.

Pharmacies

Your local pharmacy will stock oral health products including tubes of toothpaste and toothbrushes.

They can have discounts and multibuy available, especially helpful if you live in a household of more than one person. This may not be available all the time so you may have to keep an eye out for when these deals become available.



However, it is good to be aware that bargains can be found for what you need for keeping your mouth in great condition. Often doing so will stop further problems down the line meaning you will spend much less money in the long term.

Discount shops

Discount shops are great for a variety of reasons as they often have items that are a household necessity for much cheaper prices.

You could find everything for your dental needs including toothpaste, toothbrushes, mouthwash and floss. These can often be the same big named brands that you are used to for significantly cheaper.

We would advise double-checking the expiration dates on what you buy. Often a toothpaste will have a shelf life of one to two years from the date of manufacture which can be found on the tube, so you probably won't get caught out.

However, it is always best to check this along with the level of fluoride it contains.

Which?

Which? has been testing products and comparing prices ever since the 1970s. It offers free impartial advice by testing manufacturers' claims and conducting surveys on consumer satisfaction.

They do this to more than 3,600 products including toothpaste and other dental hygiene products. It is certainly worth a look if you are considering changing your dental routine to better suit your oral health needs, you never know how many pennies you can save!

This is especially true if you are looking into buying an electric toothbrush as there are many varieties out there.

If you would like to have a look at some of their suggestions follow the link here: <https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/electric-toothbrushes/article/choosing-the-best-toothpaste-a5QIY0j8jkeT>

Ukraine Head & Neck Cancer Help

Ukraine Head and Neck Cancer Help is a new website that offers support and guidance for Ukrainian refugees new to the UK.

The website provides information about the disease in both Ukrainian and English, including how to spot head and neck cancer early, and where to go if anything out of the ordinary is found.

The new resource lists support groups and networks for those coping with a head and neck cancer diagnosis and help people who are new to the UK understand and navigate the NHS system.

Dr Nigel Carter, chief executive of the Oral Health Foundation says: "Medical needs do not stop when your whole life is uprooted, and many refugees have found that they struggle to get the medical attention they need.

"Certain medical needs like treatments for head and neck cancers can be devastating when not met. Head and neck cancer can be one of the most debilitating conditions as it can affect all aspects of everyday life including eating and speaking. Early diagnosis and treatments are key in such cases and can save lives."

Being forced from their homes, 30,000 Ukrainians have arrived in the UK, after fleeing the Russian invasion. If peace is not reached, more may have to come here for their own safety. The UN estimates that approximately 4.3 million refugees have already fled Ukraine.

It can be very confusing having to come to a completely new country, amongst trying to

find food and shelter but also medical aid. Dr Carter adds: "This website will help to bridge the language barrier and provide ongoing support for those living with head and neck cancer.

"By coming together and making this website, will make a real difference to those that truly need the help and support. Head and Neck cancers are not always readily apparent, but it is important to recognise the symptoms and seek help."

Ukraine Head and Neck Cancer Help is a collaboration between The Swallows Charity, Oral Health Foundation, Mouth Cancer Foundation, Oracle Cancer Trust, National Association of Laryngectomy Clubs, Young Tongues Group, Salivary Gland Cancer UK and Heads2gether.

Visit www.ukrainehncancer.co.uk for more information.

A free 24/7 helpline is also available for those in need of support (03303 207 045).



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Oral Health Foundation

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Dental teams can be ‘vital link’ in caring for patients with eating disorders, says charity

Dental teams are in the ideal position to identify and act on early signs of eating disorders, says the Oral Health Foundation.

Around 1.25 million people in the UK are affected by an eating disorder and many can be recognised by a range of common problems in the mouth.

Around nine-in-ten (90%) patients with bulimia and one-in-five (20%) with anorexia suffer from enamel erosion. Tooth decay, sensitive teeth, dry mouth and enlarged salivary glands are also frequent.

The Oral Health Foundation believes that thousands of undiagnosed eating disorder can be picked up during regular dental check-ups by dentists, dental hygienists, therapists, and dental nurses.

Chief executive of the Oral Health Foundation, Dr Nigel Carter, says: “During the routine dental examination, dental teams carry out checks on the hard and soft

tissues of the mouth and look for signs of tooth erosion. They will also look for possible injuries to the mouth which could have been induced by inserting foreign objects that cause a person to vomit.

“The UK needs a far better strategy for diagnosing eating disorders early. The sooner an eating disorder is suspected or recognised, then the more



effective treatment will be. This treatment extends far beyond any damage caused to the mouth. It is also necessary to instigate wider medical referrals to those who specialise in treating eating disorders.”

Dental erosion from vomiting

In the UK, around 275,000 people suffer from binge eating disorders, 235,000 have bulimia and 100,000 are diagnosed with anorexia.

Those who purge through vomiting often suffer from enamel erosion and those with binge eating disorders may have an increased risk of tooth decay and tooth loss through excessive sugar consumption.

The lack of vitamins and nutrient deficiencies associated with eating disorders can cause the body to shut down and not function properly. This will be reflected by signs in the mouth.

“As well as erosion through stomach acid, dental teams will also be able to detect conditions such as tooth decay, from excessive sugar consumption and signs of nutrient deficiencies,” adds Dr Carter.

“If they suspect that a person might be suffering from an eating disorder, they will be able to talk calmly through the clinical signs they are seeing in the mouth. They might also speak about prescribing a high fluoride toothpaste or varnish to protect

your teeth from decay.

“The more open and honest patients can be with their dental team, the better they will be able to help. Your dental team can be trusted to help you and will not judge you over any symptoms you are having.”

The Oral Health Foundation is currently running National Smile Month – a campaign that champions the importance of having good oral health. During the campaign, the charity is keen to support those with severe oral health needs and improve awareness and information about the health of the mouth.

Brooke Sharp is a Clinical Advice Coordinator at Beat, the UK’s eating disorder charity. She says: “Eating disorders impact

around 1.25 million people in the UK of all ages, genders and backgrounds and you cannot tell if someone has an eating disorder by looking at them. This means that eating disorders can go undetected for a long time. However, physical signs of an eating disorder, such as dental erosion or sensitivity can occur, mean that dentists may be among the first to observe the signs and symptoms.

At Beat, we are currently working on a webinar series to educate different health sectors about health, which includes dentists, dieticians, and pharmacists. The aim of this training will be to help professionals identify the signs of an eating disorder and understand how to support their patients. However, whilst it's important to increase awareness of eating disorders, it is never the role of dentists to diagnose or treat the eating disorder, and patients must always be signposted to specialist support."

Anorexia and oral health

Tina McGuff is a mother of four children and struggled most of her life with anorexia and obsessional exercise behaviours. She has fully recovered and lives a healthy life, even writing a book to help other people who are going through the same struggles. Currently, she is helping to educate others on mental health and how to cope with different needs. It can be hard for dental teams to broach the subject with those who are suffering from eating disorders.

Tina says: "I could see the impact it was having on my oral health, and I was eventually hospitalized in a psychiatric ward as a teenager. There were a lot of problems with my teeth even at that time because I was sick all the time."

Constant stomach acid on teeth can erode the tooth's enamel. As the teeth are weakened, it is also important not to brush straight after being sick as this could further damage the teeth. Instead, simply rinse with water or use a safe fluoride mouthwash recommended by

your dentist.

Tina explained that she assumed the dentist would simply be able to fix everything at the end of her struggle and that it would not impact her dental health going forward. "It is so good that awareness is now being raised as to how eating disorders can impact your mouth," Tina adds. "All the sugary things I was taking to try to get back into normal eating meant that my teeth were always being attacked.

"I was aware of oral hygiene. I did brush and floss my teeth. I also wasn't probably using the right products with the correct amount of fluoride. It felt almost futile, but I did it because it was the only right thing I could do.

"The most interesting thing is that when I did go to the dentist, which I did a lot when I was younger, was that not one dentist ever said anything to me. It was only this last year that the dentist sat me down and said I have some concerns with the pattern in your mouth – do you have an eating disorder? It was so sad he was the first one to ever ask. Someone must have spotted and seen, but no one person ever said anything, and it would have been a great opportunity to have that discussion."

Tina is currently pushing for more research into how best to help patients with eating disorders. This could be a great step forward for the wellness of those who struggle with eating disorders.

Rhian Lovell has a long history of eating disorders. She is 39 years old and living currently in South Wales. Rhian says: "The longest-lasting legacy of my eating disorder is my teeth. I have spent probably the best part of £6,000 and lost five or six teeth. I am going to get dental implants for the teeth which are missing. While I was unwell, I did try to take care of my teeth but when you are vomiting multiple times a day that is going to have a long-term impact.

"When you have an eating disorder, self-care



is not very high on your priorities. I probably didn't brush all the times when I should have.

"The dentist I registered within Cardiff when I was eighteen is still my dentist to this day. The worst part before I had my treatments was having constant infections in my mouth, I was lucky because he was always at the end of the phone for me. Even now it is over an hour's drive away, but he understands what I've been through, and he understands how to encourage me and what advice to give me.

"My advice for dental teams is to try to approach it sensibly and sensitively. If there is a decline in dental health there is, of course, a reason for it and I don't think it is unreasonable to have the conversation like that. It was a bit of a relief for me for my dentist

to know why my teeth were a mess. I knew I wasn't taking care of my teeth, it almost made it easier for me to deal with. My teeth still frustrate me, but they look okay now, and they work."

The Oral Health Foundation urges anyone with an eating disorder, or family and friends with eating disorders, to get help reach out for support. Both Tina and Rhian volunteer for Beat, the UK's an eating disorder charity that strives to help people overcome their problems supports people affected by eating disorders. Beat's helpline is open 365 days a year on 0808 801 0677 or via [beateatingdisorders.org.uk](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/). You can find more help here at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/> for information and support.

Fall in children's tooth extractions labelled 'smokescreen' by oral health

The Oral Health Foundation warns that thousands of children have been left to suffer in pain for more than one year, as the number of tooth extractions for young people in England falls by more than half during the pandemic.



The number of extractions performed on decayed teeth in children aged 19 and under decreased from 35,190 in 2019-20 to 14,615 in 2020-21, data from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities shows.

However, the oral health charity says the fall in the number of procedures, which take place in hospital under general anaesthetic, do not reflect any change in demand.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation says: "To report that childhood tooth extractions in England have

shrunk is a smokescreen towards the reality of what is happening. Tooth decay in children has not simply disappeared over the last year which means that thousands of young people are going without the treatment they need.

"It is unfair and unjust for just one child, let alone thousands, to be put in pain because they are unable to access the care they deserve."

More than 12.5m NHS dental appointments for children had been lost in England since lockdown, while tooth extractions had been the most common reason for hospital admissions

among young children for a generation.

"There now needs to be an urgent and decisive plan from government about how they plan to tackle the backlog in dentistry," adds Dr Carter. "We also need open and transparent clarity about the scale of the backlog and which NHS dental practices are able to take new patients.

"NHS dentistry is in dire needs of a new contract. We also need to be training far more dentists. All in all, the provision and funding for NHS dentistry falls well below the threshold that is needed for the needs of the population."

In addition to the Oral Health Foundation seeking clarity on access to NHS dentistry, they are urging government to move forward with plans that can drastically improve rates of childhood tooth decay.

The charity is calling for the widescale implementation of a national water fluoridation scheme. Currently, as little as 11% of the UK's water supply has fluoride added to it.

Dr Carter says: "Water fluoridation is one of the single most credible and impactful policies that can have a significant impact on tooth decay. The data on children's hospital extractions and community water fluoridation is staggering – in fluoridated areas, hospital admissions fall by as much as 68%."

The charity also believes there should be further extensions to the sugar tax.

"Since it was introduced, the sugar tax has done

a remarkable job at removing sugar from soft drinks," adds Dr Carter. "It is now time this was widening to include other sugary foods and drinks. These measures would be highly effective alongside junk food advertising bans."



Something to smile about: tooth whitening treatments set to double

The number of UK adults having their teeth whitened could double over the next year, according to the findings of a new poll.

Research by the Oral Health Foundation and Oral-B found that as many as one-in-five (21%) could be set to visit the dentist over the next 12 months for tooth whitening treatments.

This figure has doubled compared to the previous year, when around one-in-ten (11%) had the procedure.

The Oral Health Foundation put the rise in demand for tooth whitening down to people returning to social events and the resumption of travel.

Dr Nigel Carter, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation, says: “How people view their smile has a direct impact on how confident they are. A white smile has been shown to boost self-esteem and help people thrive in social settings.

“As people fully return to pre-pandemic socialising, hobbies and holidays, the smile quickly becomes very important. This means it is likely the demand for treatments like tooth whitening will rise.

“Covid-19 has also presented difficulties for people accessing dentistry, with practices unable to see the usual number of patients, and treatments being limited. As dental practices resume to full capacity, there will

be more opportunities for people to go in and have their teeth whitened by a dentist or hygienist.”

The nationwide poll, quizzing over 2,000 UK adults, found that one-in-four women (25%) and nearly one-in-five (18%) men are planning to have professional teeth whitening this year.

Tooth whitening treatments are far more popular amongst younger adults. More than four-in-ten (42%) 18-24-year-olds claim they will have their teeth whitening over the next year. Younger adults are over three times more likely to have their teeth whitened compared with their parents (13%) and eight times more likely than their grandparents (6%).

According to further research by the charity, an increase in video calls during the pandemic led to one-in-three (33%) young people becoming more aware about the colour of their teeth.

Tooth colour is the most common reason for somebody to feel anxious about their smile. In total, more than one-in-three (37%) regularly feel self-conscious about their smile.

“Many people see their smile as an influential factor in their friendships, relationship and careers so it is quite



understandable why so much emphasis is being placed on it,” adds Dr Carter.

“The important thing to remember is that everybody is different and very few people have brilliantly white teeth. It’s perfectly normal for teeth to discolour over time or stained through the food and drink.”

Insert name, insert job title at Oral-B says: “Insert comment about the importance of having whitening done professionally at a dentist and why people should choose this route (safer, better results, they are able to spot and treat signs of disease etc.)”

The Oral Health Foundation is running National Smile Month to get everybody learning more about how to look after the health of their mouth.

The charity campaign provides easy-to-follow tips about how to have the best daily oral health routine, as well as lots of advice about how

nutrition affects the mouth.

Dr Carter says: “Having white teeth does not mean they are healthy – which is the most important thing. By maintaining a good oral health regime, you can protect your teeth and help to maintain them throughout your life.

“For a great oral health routine, brush last thing at night and at one other time during the day with a fluoride toothpaste. Cleaning in between the teeth everyday with interdental brushes is vital, and daily rinse of fluoride mouthwash will give added protection.

Insert name (Oral-B) says: “Insert comment reducing sugar consumption and maintain regular dental visits.”

Learn more about how to look after oral health at www.smilemonth.org



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