

# KEEPING YOUR TEETH FOR A LIFETIME...

## EASY AS!

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Having a healthy mouth is important for overall health and well being.

Healthy teeth and gums play an important part in your ability to smile, eat, speak and socialize. As a young adult you are no longer eligible for free dental care. From now onwards you will be covering the costs for your dental care. More than ever it is important to have good oral health.

In this pack you will find the facts and simple tips on how to take care of your teeth and keep them – for life. If you have any questions or need help, just talk to your dentist.



NEW ZEALAND  
DENTAL ASSOCIATION



MINISTRY OF  
HEALTH  
MANATU HAORA



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# TAKING CARE OF YOUR TEETH... FOR LIFE



Taking care of your teeth need not be an onerous task.

It can be as simple as 5 minutes a day brushing your teeth in the morning and before going to bed at night.

## Tips for taking good care of your teeth:



- Brush teeth with a fluoride toothpaste, twice daily
  - Before going to sleep at night
  - In the morning, after breakfast
- Floss daily
- Visit your dentist
- Have a healthy diet that is low in sugar
- Stop smoking



# How to BRUSH

BRUSH

Effective daily removal of dental plaque is vital to maintain good oral health. Brushing and flossing are the two most important ways of removing plaque.

Brush twice daily, morning and night, for at least two minutes. Use a soft bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.



Cheek Side



Tongue Side

Hold your toothbrush at a 45° angle to your gums. Brush all tooth surfaces gently and thoroughly by moving your brush back and forth in short tooth-wide strokes.



Biting Side

“ If you forgot to brush, or no toothbrush is handy, it's not the end of the world... just brush when next able to.

Meanwhile you can rinse, using water or saline, floss if available or rub on toothpaste ”



# How to FLOSS

Dental floss or inter-dental brushes must be used at least once daily to clean between teeth.

FLOSS



1. Take enough floss and wind it around both middle fingers and support it across your thumbs and index fingers.



3. Curve the floss into a c-shape around the tooth at the gumline and move it up and down the tooth to clean the tooth.



2. Insert the floss gently between the teeth with side-to-side motion taking care not to snap it in place.

4. Use a clean segment of the floss to repeat the same on the rest of your teeth.



Inter-dental brushes are very small 'bottle brushes' that can be like a 'Christmas tree' or cylindrical in shape.

These brushes can be used to clean between the teeth where there are larger spaces. The brush might be attached to a short or long handle. Use the brush by pushing the brush portion through the gap between teeth five or six times to make sure that the food and plaque are removed.



**“ If you have a toothache, make an appointment with your dentist. If necessary take paracetamol. If you have an infection or swollen face - seek urgent medical attention. If in extreme pain, go to your DHB's emergency dental department. WINZ support may be available. ”**

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# VISITING your DENTIST

Don't wait for problems to develop. By visiting your dentist regularly for a check-up you can treat any problems early and reduce considerable time, stress and cost.

## Regular check-ups may include:

- Examination of your teeth, gums and mouth for any problems
- X-rays to find tooth decay and other problems that can't be seen just by looking clinically
- Fillings to stop decay from spreading and damaging your teeth
- Professional cleaning by your dentist or dental hygienist to remove tartar (hardened plaque) and stains from your teeth
- Specific advice on diet and oral hygiene to help prevent further dental problems



DENTIST VISITS

If you delay dental treatment it may end up costing you a lot more than if you get your teeth fixed straight away. For example, if a simple cavity needing a filling is left untreated, it could eventually lead you to needing a Root Canal Treatment (RCT).

### Treating straight away



*Amalgam filling*

Number of appointments – 1  
Total time required\* – 30 to 40 minutes  
Cost\* – \$150 to \$180

### Delayed treatment



*Root canal filling*

Number of appointments – Several  
Total time required\* – 1 to 2 hours  
Cost\* – \$700 to \$1100

\* Please note the time and costs are indicative only.  
Actual time and costs may vary.

It is important to remember that there is no fixed or recommended fee structure for private dentists. Dental practices set their fees based on factors such as;

- *Location*
- *Type* – specialist or general dental practice
- *Facility* – advanced equipment and/or techniques
- *Choices* – flexible appointment times etc

For example, the average fee range for a single surface amalgam filling can be \$115-\$151\*\*

\*\* Based on NZDA fee survey 2010

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# what about **DIET??**

We all know that we need good teeth to be able to eat and enjoy a wide variety of nutritional foods. But, do you know what we eat can affect our teeth?

## Tooth decay

Tooth decay is one of the most serious effects of diet on teeth. Each time we consume foods and drinks that contain sugars our teeth are attacked by dietary acids. The acids are developed by the combination of plaque bacteria and sugars in the diet.



Tooth decay



## Amount of sugar in common drinks

Drink	added sugar content
Water	none
Flavoured water	2.5tsp
Plain milk	none
Carton flavoured milk (1 cup/250ml)	3tsp
Carton fruit juice (1 cup/250ml)	7tsp
Energy drink (1 cup/250ml can)	7tsp
Sports drink (600ml bottle)	10tsp
Fizzy drink (1 can/355ml)	10 tsp



## Dental erosion

Dental erosion is the loss of the surface of the tooth – especially enamel – caused by acids in foods and drinks. Unlike tooth decay, here the bacteria don't play a role in producing acids. Acids from foods and drinks cause the enamel to dissolve from the tooth.

Food and drinks that are acidic (with a pH lower than 5.5) have a high erosive potential.

### pH (acid level) of common drinks

Drink	acid content
Water	7 (pH neutral)
Plain milk	6.8
Apple juice	3.3
Grapefruit juice	3.2
Orange juice	3.7
Fizzy drinks	2.4-3.2
Wine	3.7
Sports drinks	2.8-3.4

*Drinks with pH lower than 5.5 are erosive.*



### Follow these simple dietary steps to keep your teeth for life:

- Reduce the amount and frequency of consumption of food containing sugars, especially added sugars
- Consume a diet high in fruits, vegetables and wholegrain starchy foods and low in sugars and fat
- Choose healthy foods for snacking between meals and limit sweet foods and drinks. The more time the teeth are in contact with sugars and acids, the more likely the teeth are to dissolve or decay.

# preventing **TOOTH DECAY**

The decay process can be painless and occur over a long period of time. Decay can occur on any part of the tooth, even in exposed root surfaces.

Decay can also occur around and under existing fillings. Sometimes, particularly in its early stages, decay can only be detected by an X-ray examination.

#### **Common causes:**

- Poor or lack of tooth brushing
- Not using a fluoride toothpaste
- Lack of cleaning between teeth
- Frequent consumption of foods and drinks high in sugar



### **Warning signs:**

- Tooth covered in food and debris
- Holes in teeth
- Broken teeth
- Brown or discoloured teeth
- Tooth sensitivity to hot or cold foods
- Difficulty chewing or eating
- Toothache
- Bad breath
- Swelling in the face and/or jaw area

### **How to prevent:**

Tooth decay can be prevented by:

- Daily effective removal of plaque by brushing and flossing
- Using fluoride toothpaste for protection against tooth decay
- Reducing the amount and frequency of consumption of foods and drinks containing sugars, especially added sugars
- Regular professional dental care to spot and treat tooth decay, to stop further damage to your teeth



# preventing GUM DISEASE

Gum disease, or periodontal disease, is an inflammatory disease caused by buildup of dental plaque on the teeth. The bacteria in dental plaque affect the gums and other tissues that support the teeth. There are two types of gum disease – gingivitis and periodontitis.

## Gingivitis

Gingivitis is a mild form of gum disease that is often gets unnoticed as it is not painful. If treated immediately gingivitis can be reversed, but if left untreated, it can develop into periodontitis, a more destructive form of gum disease.

Common causes:

- Poor or lack of tooth brushing
- Lack of cleaning between teeth

Warning signs:

- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Bleeding while brushing or flossing
- Bad breath

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*How to prevent:*

- Daily effective removal of plaque by brushing and flossing
  - Regular professional cleaning to remove plaque and tartar (hardened dental plaque).
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Gingivitis

## Periodontitis

Periodontitis is the destructive form of gum disease. Untreated gingivitis can advance to periodontitis. With time, bacteria can spread and grow below the gum line. Toxins produced by the bacteria can trigger an inflammatory response which destroys the periodontal fibres (gum tissues) and bone supporting the teeth. As the disease progresses more gum tissue and bone are destroyed. Eventually, the tooth can become loose and fall out, or it may have to be removed.



### Common causes:

- Poor or lack of toothbrushing
- Lack of cleaning between teeth
- Untreated gingivitis

### Warning signs:

- Red, swollen or tender gums
- Receding gums, or gums that pull away from the teeth
- Loose teeth
- Pus between the gum and the tooth
- Bad breath
- Change in the way teeth fit together when biting

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### How to prevent:

- Daily effective removal of plaque by brushing & flossing
  - Regular professional cleaning to remove plaque and tartar (hardened dental plaque)
  - Quit smoking
- 

**“ If you have bleeding gums, make an appointment to see your dentist. Keep brushing, and rinse with saline or chlorhexidine. ”**



# Tobacco and **ORAL HEALTH**

Around one in five adults smoke in New Zealand. On average, a smoker who smokes a pack a day spends over \$4000 a year on cigarettes. In addition to general health problems, smoking can cause oral diseases such as oral cancer and gum disease.

**T**OBACCO

## **Oral Cancer**

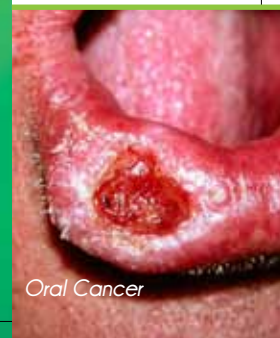
Tobacco use (smoking) is a major cause of cancer in the mouth. Oral cancer includes cancer of lip, tongue, cheeks and other sites in the mouth.

The risk of oral cancer increases with the number of smoking years – the longer you smoke the greater the risk.

When tobacco use is combined with high alcohol consumption it poses an even bigger threat for developing oral cancer.

Usually oral cancer is identified by a sore or lump in the mouth that does not heal. The early stage of oral cancer is usually not painful and by the time the symptoms are noticeable the cancer may be more advanced and may not be able to be treated.

*Regular dental check-ups are important to detect early signs of oral cancer.*



Oral Cancer

## Gum Disease

Tobacco use (smoking) is a big risk factor for developing gum disease. Smoking affects the gums by:

- producing more dental plaque than non-smokers
- causing gum disease to progress more rapidly
- affecting the healing of infected gums by reducing the supply of oxygen in the bloodstream

If gum disease isn't treated the disease will progress. The gum tissue and the bone surrounding the teeth can be destroyed and in the end teeth may be lost. Research shows that smokers lose more teeth than non-smokers.

Other oral problems caused by smoking include

- Loss of taste
- Stained teeth
- Mouth sores
- Bad breath
- Smoking can also affect healing after gum disease treatment and cause problems after tooth extraction.



*Gum Disease*

If you are a smoker, by quitting smoking you can reduce the risk of oral and general health problems. In New Zealand, ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) provides support and advice for people who want to quit smoking.

You can contact ASH at [www.ash.org.nz](http://www.ash.org.nz) or Quitline 0800 778 778.



# CANNABIS METHAMPHETAMINE and ORAL HEALTH

Use of cannabis and/or methamphetamine can also cause problems in your mouth. Methamphetamine can lead to tooth decay, and cannabis can increase your risk of developing gum disease.

## **Meth mouth:**

This is a condition seen in the mouth of some users of methamphetamine. This illegal drug causes severe tooth decay to the extent where teeth are heavily stained and destroyed badly. Often, the teeth have to be removed because they can't be fixed.

There are various reasons for the cause of meth mouth including:

- poor oral hygiene among users
- acidity of the drug
- drug-induced dry mouth
- craving for fizzy and/or sugary drinks
- a tendency to clench or grind their teeth.

*If you are addicted to any drugs and would like to get some help, contact the Alcohol Drug Helpline at 0800 787 797 or visit their website at [www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz](http://www.alcoholdrughelp.org.nz)*





# First Aid: **KNOCKED OUT TEETH**

When accidents happen, teeth can sometimes be completely knocked out. Many teeth can be replaced after being knocked out and some will survive very well after this.

The longer the tooth is out of the socket the poorer the chance it has of surviving long term.

- Replace the tooth into its socket as soon as possible. This can be done by another person or the injured person themselves.
- Hold the tooth by the crown, ensure that there is no dirt or debris on the root and wash briefly under water.
- Gently push the tooth back into its socket.
- Hold the tooth in place by biting gently on a piece of cloth and see your dentist immediately.



**KNOCKED OUT  
TEETH**

It is important to keep the outside of the root healthy.

- If the tooth cannot be replaced into its socket, store it in milk to keep the cells on the outside of the tooth as healthy as possible until the tooth can be replanted.
- If milk is not readily available store the tooth under the lip of the injured person (be careful not to swallow it).
- Scrubbing the root or wrapping it in a dry tissue will damage the root surface.

See your dentist as soon as you can.

- Knocked-out teeth nearly always need to be splinted to hold them into the correct position until the tooth connects to the socket.
- Some complications may occur after the tooth has been knocked out and replanted. Your dentist will check for these.

Please remember this advice is only for managing knocked-out permanent teeth. If a baby tooth is knocked out, do not try to put it back in its socket, as this may damage the adult tooth that is developing under it. Always seek advice and treatment from a dentist.



# First Aid: **BROKEN TEETH**

## Broken Teeth

Broken or chipped teeth are the most common dental injury. Sometimes these teeth can be very sensitive due to the inner layers of the teeth [dental pulp (nerve) or dentine] becoming exposed. Other times the teeth don't cause any discomfort, but they don't look great.

- It is important to protect these teeth to prevent infection developing inside the tooth, which can lead to an abscess.
- See your dentist for a protective covering over the tooth or a filling to replace the broken piece.
- Sometimes the broken fragment can be replaced, so if this is available then bring it with you and your dentist will decide if it can be used. Your dentist will do their best to get your broken tooth to look normal again.



*Broken tooth*

## Displaced Teeth

Sometimes, a tooth can get displaced from its position within your mouth due to dental trauma. This may be very obvious if the tooth is pushed backwards or hanging out. Other times it may be less obvious.

- After an accident if you are having trouble closing your teeth together in a normal position, it is possible that a tooth may have moved.
- It is important that these teeth are put back in their normal position as soon as possible.
- This gives the tooth the best chance of surviving and reduces complications and further treatment later.
- See your dentist immediately if teeth have been displaced.

Sometimes injuries to the mouth can result in damage to the lips (cuts and bruises) or gums and structures surrounding the teeth.

It is important to get these checked properly for any underlying damage, such as broken bones around the teeth or the jaws, and any debris or tooth fragment that may be in a cut lip.

You can contact your dentist, doctor or the local hospital for this.



*Displaced tooth*









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