



Thames Valley
Community
Dental Services

Looking after teeth, gums and oral health



Wellbeing for life

Good oral health is more than just having a lovely smile. Good oral health helps us to feel more confident at school, at work, in our careers, with our friends and in other social situations.

Good oral health has a huge impact on our general health, our physical wellbeing and our quality of life too. Healthy teeth help us to chew the foods that are valuable to our overall health, help us speak clearly and provide some shape to our faces.

Poor oral health and hygiene can lead to dental decay, gum disease, periodontal disease and tooth loss. Poor oral health has been linked to general health conditions such as diabetes, strokes, cardiovascular disease and premature birth. Looking after your teeth, gums and mouth is important and may help improve your general health too.

What is tooth decay?

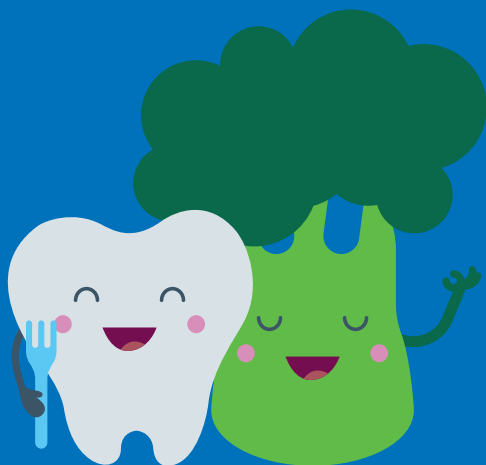
Tooth decay is when the sugars that are in our foods react with the bacteria that are always in our mouths to create an acid.

Over time, this acid attacks the outside of the teeth, wearing away the tooth, which leads to a hole in the tooth or teeth. If the hole gets bigger and deeper, it causes pain and may lead to tooth loss.

What is dental erosion?

Dental erosion is when acid wears away the enamel (the outer part) of our teeth. This acid may come from acidic drinks and/or some medical conditions.

Medical conditions may include acid reflux. Acidic drinks include those that are fizzy, fruit flavoured, fruit smoothies and fruit juices.



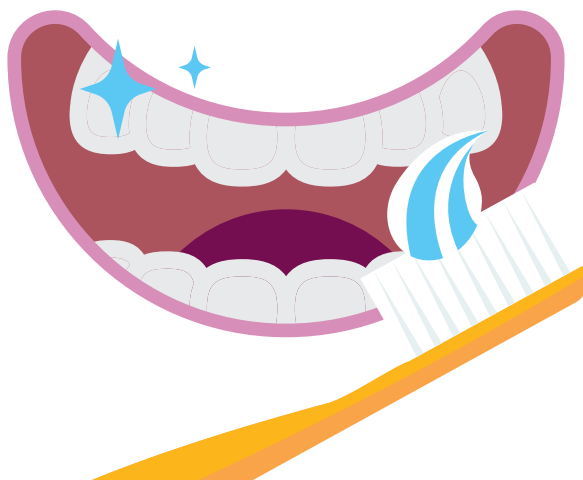
How do I prevent tooth decay, tooth erosion and gum disease?

1. Toothbrushing

- Brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes last thing before you go to sleep and one other time during the day
- Use a pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste which contains at least 1,350ppm of fluoride. For children under 3yrs use a smear of toothpaste with at least 1,000ppm of fluoride
- Brush all surfaces of your teeth including gums
- After brushing your teeth for two minutes, spit out any excess toothpaste. There is no need to rinse your mouth out as the fluoride will stay on your teeth and help to protect them
- If you are able to, use interdental brushes and floss to clean between your teeth to help keep your gums healthy
- If you find your gums do bleed a little, keep brushing and this should stop. If your gums are still bleeding after a few days and/ or you are concerned, please see your dentist
- A mouthwash is not necessary to use unless it has been recommended by your dentist.
- A mouthwash is best used between meals when you are unable to clean your teeth; perhaps when you get home from school or work.



**Two
minutes**





2. Healthy diet

Try to eat a balanced diet with at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day and reduce how often you have sugary foods and drinks.

Reduce how often you have fizzy drinks or drinks containing pureed fruit/fruit juice. Keep sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes.

Choose snacks and drinks that are kinder to teeth, such as water, milk, crackers, cheese, toast, breadsticks, nuts (if you or someone close to you are not allergic to them), seeds, raw vegetables, plain popcorn.

Ask someone to help you understand food labels so you can understand what foods may contain hidden sugars. For example, sugars in cakes or some processed foods. Keep alcohol consumption to recommended levels.

3. See your dentist

See your dentist every six months or as often as they recommend. You can find a dentist by visiting www.nhs.uk.

If you have any concerns about your teeth, gums or mouth please see your dentist, dental nurse or dental hygienist.

What is gum disease?

Gum disease is when your gums become red, swollen, sore and may sometimes bleed. Gum disease may lead to bad breath, the gums coming away from the teeth and loose teeth.

Gum disease and periodontal disease may occur when your oral health could be improved and/or you have an underlying condition that increases your risk. For example, smoking, diabetes, pregnancy.



Remember:

- Children will need help to brush their teeth until they are 7-years-old
- Someone who has had a stroke or has another physical condition that may affect their dexterity may need help to brush their teeth
- If you have partial/full dentures they will need cleaning with soap and soaking in denture cleaner every day. Toothpaste may scratch your dentures. Remove your dentures at night unless you have been asked to keep them in.



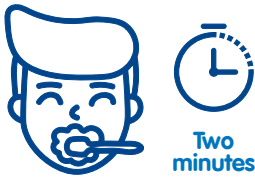
Advice from your dentist or dental nurse:

Easy read

Keeping your teeth healthy



Brush just before you go to bed and one other time during the day.



Brush for at least 2 minutes. Spit but don't rinse.



Use:

- 1350ppm-1500ppm Fluoride toothpaste
- Dental floss and Interdental brushes (which clean in between your teeth).



Electric toothbrush

An electric toothbrush may make brushing easier.



Visit the dentist every six months or as often as they say. If you have any questions, ask your dentist.

Food and drink for healthy teeth

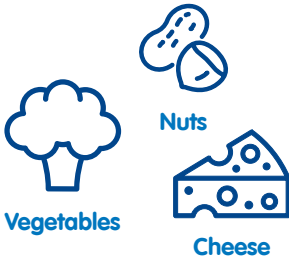


Water



Milk

Drinks without sugar like milk and water help to protect your teeth.



Vegetables

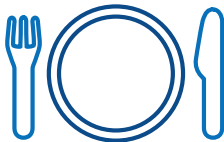
Nuts

Cheese

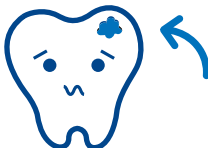
Savoury foods like vegetables, nuts and cheese are good for your teeth.



What you eat and drink between meals can cause holes in your teeth. Choose savoury snacks or whole fruit.



Reduce how often you have sugary foods/drinks. Keep sugary foods/drinks for mealtimes.



Watch out for hidden sugars found in fruit juices, smoothies and sauces.

This document is also available in other languages that aren't on this list, large print, Braille and audio format upon request. Please email communications.cnwl@nhs.net.

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضاً بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبصيغة سمعية عند الطلب

Arabic

این مدرک همچنین بنا به درخواست به زبانهای دیگر، در چاپ درشت و در فرمت صوتی موجود است.

Farsi

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে, ব্রেল এবং অডিও টেপ আকারেও অনুরোধ পাওয়া যায়

Bengali

Dokumentigaan waxaa xitaa lagu heli karaa luqado kale, daabacad far waa-wayn, farta indhoolaha (Braille) iyo hab dhegaysi ah markii la soo codsado.

Somali

Mediante solicitação, este documento encontra-se também disponível noutras línguas, num formato de impressão maior, em Braille e em áudio.

Portuguese

நீங்கள் கேட்டுக்கொண்டால், இந்த ஆவணம் வேறு மொழிகளிலும், பெரிய எழுத்து அச்சிலும் அல்லது ஒலிநாடா வடிவிலும் அளிக்கப்படும்.

Tamil

Este documento también está disponible y puede solicitarse en otros idiomas, letra grande, braille y formato de audio.

Spanish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku, w alfabecie Braille'a lub w formie audio.

Polish

આ દસ્તાવેજ વિનંતી કરવાથી બીજી ભાષાઓ, મોટા છાપેલા અક્ષરો અથવા ઓડિઓ રચનામાં પણ મળી રહેશે.

Gujarati

Be belge istenirse, başka dillerde, iri harflerle, Braille ile (görme engelliler için) ve ses kasetinde de temin edilebilir.

Turkish