

Smileguide

Oral health tips, information and offers.

Links between your oral health and overall wellbeing

Snack attack!
Healthy foods for your teeth

How to deal with a dental emergency



Denplan

At the heart of dental care

Features

Here at Denplan, we are passionate about good oral health. Our aim is to educate everyone on the importance of this and how it benefits your overall health and wellbeing.

In between dentist appointments, there are lots of things you can do to look after your teeth and gums. The Smile Guide is our dedicated magazine for employees, offering advice, tips and information around oral health.



Keep up to date on your oral health

Ways to maintain your oral health and useful contacts for Denplan members.



Dental care at the heart of general wellbeing

Exploring the link between dental care and overall wellbeing.



Snack attack!

Do you know which snacks to embrace and which to avoid?



The silent risk of gum disease

Why caring for your gums is a lifelong task and shouldn't be underestimated.



What to do in a dental emergency

If you have an emergency while away from home, UK or abroad, find out what you should do.

Maintain your oral health with our unique **online tools**



Find out more at www.denplan.co.uk/my-teeth

myteeth

Myteeth, dental advice at your fingertips. In between visiting your dentist, have a look at our dedicated oral health website, where you can find oral health tips, advice, latest news and offers. The site also has a section for your children's oral health with activities and tooth-friendly tips.



Find out your oral health score at www.denplan.co.uk/mydentalscore

How healthy is your mouth? Most people want great oral health, but would you know how vulnerable you are to oral diseases? My Dental Score is a free assessment tool for people to find out the state of their oral health. After a short survey, a report is generated with your oral health score highlighting any risks. This personalised result can be printed and taken to discuss at your next dental examination.



Healthy *mouth,* healthy *heart*



What your mouth reveals about your health

Have you ever wondered what the dentist is looking for when you sit back in that chair? It's more than you might think...

Increasingly, scientific research is finding connections between oral health and serious health conditions including diabetes, heart disease, strokes, kidney disease, and rheumatoid arthritis.

This means that when you visit your dentist for a dental check-up, they're not only looking at your teeth, they're also keeping an eye out for any dental issues that could increase your risk of developing or worsening any other health conditions in your body.

How is oral health linked to other diseases in the body?

Although scientists aren't exactly sure of what's behind the links between oral health and overall health, the current and most popular train of thought is that it might be to do with how the body reacts to inflammation.

It's thought that, if inflammation in the mouth is left untreated, such as prolonged gum disease, it may trigger an inflammatory response elsewhere in the body, which can be an underlying issue in diseases including heart disease and rheumatoid arthritis.



Protect your heart and *smile*

Whether this involves treating your loved one to a romantic dinner for two, or starting a new exercise regime in the gym, taking good care of your heart is very important. Here are some easy ways for you to lower your risk of cardiovascular disease, while helping to keep your teeth and gums healthy.



♥ *Eat healthily*

A healthy diet reduces your risk of developing heart disease, as well as making sure your teeth and gums get the nutrients they need.

♥ *Give up smoking*

Smoking is a leading cause of heart disease, and also increases your chances of developing mouth cancer and losing teeth through gum disease.

♥ *Monitor the alcohol you drink*

Drinking too much alcohol can have a harmful effect on your mouth and heart. Make sure you don't exceed your daily guidelines.

♥ *Stay active*

If you're physically active, you're less likely to suffer from heart disease than those who aren't. Exercise also encourages the release of endorphins that help to make us happy, giving you even more reason to take good care of your smile!

♥ *Check the state of your oral health*

Do you know how healthy your mouth is? It can be difficult to spot oral related diseases but left untreated they can have repercussions on more serious heart related diseases. You can take advantage of our dental health management tool and help get a handle on your oral health. To start your assessment click visit www.denplan.co.uk/mydentalscore

♥ *Visit your dental team regularly*

Your dentist and their practice team are best placed to spot any potential problems with your teeth and gums before they start to cause major problems. Keeping your mouth healthy may well help to keep your heart healthy too.

We support **Stoptober!** It's never too late to give up!

Stoptober

Denplan supports **Dry January!**

DRY JANUARY

Snack attack!

Our eating patterns have changed over the years; we've gone from being a nation that swore by three square meals a day to adopting a grazing culture, with many of us enjoying several snacks a day. What does this mean for our oral health? Dentist and Denplan Advisor, Dr Mike Busby, explains all...

Brush up on kids' oral care!

Helping your children to learn how to brush their teeth properly can ensure that they learn good oral health habits that last them a lifetime. Here are some of our top tips to get kids brushing right!

Use a toothbrush recommended by your dental team and get your kids to choose their favourite colours or characters.

Find a toothpaste that they like the flavour of – there are many on the market.

Brush for two minutes, twice a day. This should be last thing at night and on one other occasion during the day – usually in the morning.

♥ *Why can some snacks be harmful to teeth?*

Although we're told it's good to keep our metabolism fuelled, constant snacking can be harmful to teeth. Every time we eat sugary foods or drinks, the bacteria in our mouths produce acids that attack teeth that our saliva takes an hour to neutralise.

Constant snacking means that teeth won't recover from these attacks and enamel can weaken over time. So the next time you're

trying to decide what to snack on or have for your next meal, think about what's best for your teeth and your body.

♥ *What is considered a healthy snack?*

In between meals, most dentists will agree that it's a good idea to find snacks that are healthy for teeth as well as for your body. To help you, we've put together a snack chart opposite.



Divide brushing into four sections in the mouth and brush each quadrant for 30 seconds – upper left, upper right, lower right, lower left. Brush in a circular motion and brush each surface of each tooth – tops and sides.

Spit the toothpaste out after brushing but don't rinse. Rinsing washes away the protective fluoride.

♥ *Isn't snacking okay as long as I brush my teeth straight after?*

We're often taught as children to brush after each meal, but this is actually the worst time to do it. After eating, particularly acidic foods or drinks, tooth enamel is softer and brushing can wear this enamel away over time. Wait at least half an hour before brushing your teeth or, better still, brush before meals.

♥ *I thought that dried fruit, fruit juices and fruit smoothies were healthy?*

Although they have the word 'fruit' in them, juices and smoothies are actually very high in natural sugars and acids. If you're giving fruit juice to children, always dilute one part juice to one part water and only offer it during mealtimes, in moderation. Water and milk are still the most tooth-friendly drinks. Although often popular with children, probably because of its sweet and sticky texture, dried fruit has high concentrated levels of sugar, and can cling to teeth.



Healthy smiles

As well as eating healthily, remember to brush for two minutes, twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Also, remember to change your toothbrush at least every three months to ensure the brush is in the best state to remove plaque from your teeth.



Tooth-friendly snacks – go wild!

- ✓ Vegetables – e.g. carrot sticks, celery, peppers, cucumber
- ✓ Whole fresh fruit (limit high-acid citrus fruits)
- ✓ Beans, peas and lentils
- ✓ Wholemeal bread
- ✓ Low-sugar/fat wholegrain cereals
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Plain milk



Mostly tooth-friendly snacks – enjoy in moderation

- ✓ Low-fat cheese
- ✓ Nuts and seeds
- ✓ Flavoured low-fat low-sugar milk and yoghurts
- ✓ Breadsticks and oatcakes



Not tooth-friendly! Snacks to avoid – mealtimes only

- ✗ Chocolates and sweets
- ✗ Crisps
- ✗ Cakes, biscuits, baked goods and pastries
- ✗ Dried fruit
- ✗ Sugary yoghurts and flavoured milk drinks
- ✗ Fruit juices and smoothies
- ✗ Fizzy drinks, high sugar squash, sports drinks

The silent risk of *gum* disease

What should I do if I think I have gum disease?



What causes gum disease?

Gum disease is an infection of the tissues that support the teeth, caused mainly by bacteria found in plaque build-up. If the plaque isn't effectively removed by regularly brushing and cleaning between the teeth, the bacteria can irritate the gums causing swelling, bleeding and sometimes soreness.

There are two types of gum disease:

Gingivitis is the first stage of gum disease, and can be recognised by inflamed gums and bleeding when brushing or flossing teeth.

Periodontitis is a more serious form of gum disease. At this stage the supporting tissues around your teeth become irreversibly damaged, causing tooth loss.

Recognise the signs

Many people with gum disease are unaware they have a problem because it's often 'silent' with no pain or symptoms. However, there are a few things you might notice which could indicate early stages of gum disease:

- Sensitive or loose teeth
- Painful chewing
- Chronic bad breath or bad taste in the mouth
- Swollen, red, painful or bleeding gums
- Receding gums which will make your teeth appear longer.

♥ Visit the dentist

You should make an appointment to see your dentist if your gums are painful, swollen or if they bleed when you brush your teeth. This assessment is very important, so the correct treatment can be prescribed for you. It's important to have regular dental check-ups so that any problems with your teeth and gums can be detected and treated early.

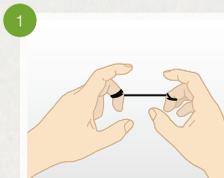
♥ Brush properly

The toothbrush is one of the best weapons we have against gum disease. Brush your teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and make sure to brush along the gum line in addition to your teeth. Replace worn-out toothbrushes at least every three to four months because they can injure your gums.

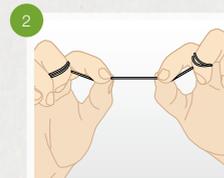
♥ Floss regularly

Flossing gets rid of the bacteria and plaque between the teeth, where brushes can't reach. Regular flossing can actually improve your gum health, and with perseverance and the correct technique, any bleeding should soon stop.

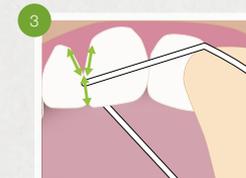
Your guide to flossing



1 Take a long length of floss and wind each end around your middle fingers.



2 Wind the floss around the fingers until, when pulled tightly the floss between each hand is around 3cm to 5cm long.



3 With the floss pulled tightly, slide it between two teeth. Guide it up and down against the surface of the teeth and below the gum line.



4 Continue this process around the mouth, moving methodically from one pair of teeth to the next.

What to do in a dental emergency



Holiday cover



Any dental emergency like an injury to the teeth or gums can be potentially serious and should not be ignored. Ignoring a dental problem can increase the risk of permanent damage as well as the need for more extensive and expensive treatment later on.

Dental first aid tips

- ♥ **Clean the area** around the sore tooth thoroughly
- ♥ **Rinse your mouth vigorously** with lukewarm (body temperature) salt water to dislodge trapped food or debris
- ♥ **Do not use very hot or very cold** salt water as this may inflame the gums!
- ♥ **Do not place aspirin** on the gum or on the aching tooth
- ♥ **If your face is swollen**, apply a cold compress and seek help from a dentist as soon as possible
- ♥ **Cold water rinses** may temporarily ease the pain from a throbbing tooth
- ♥ **Avoid lying down** as this raises the blood pressure and increases pain
- ♥ **If a permanent tooth** is knocked out, rinse it gently in water if it's dirty, and push the tooth back into its socket. If this is not possible, put the tooth into milk or saliva to keep it moist. Get to a dentist or hospital casualty department as soon as possible.

Top five dental emergencies

Tooth abscess

Loose crown/bridge needing re-cementing

Orthodontic appliance adjustments/repair

Temporary fillings

Extractions

Are you a Denplan member? Going on holiday abroad or in the UK? Don't let dental pain ruin your plans. Every person with a Denplan dental plan is covered for dental emergency or injury, wherever you are.

Where are you?



I'm home

You can visit any dentist for any emergency and non-emergency treatment up to your policy limits



If you need help locating a dentist phone call our Emergency Helpline on **+44 1962 844 999** who will help you find an appointment. Alternatively, you can use our find a dentist services, by visiting www.denplan.co.uk/findadentist



Send the claim in the usual way and we'll pay your money directly into your bank account (usually within five working days).



I'm abroad

You can see any dentist in an emergency and are covered for necessary temporary emergency treatment



We do not have registered dentists overseas so we recommend that you ask your hotel concierge, tour operator representative or any family, friends or colleagues for a recommended dentist in the area.



If you don't have any luck call our 24-hour Worldwide Emergency Helpline on **+44 1962 844 999**



Ensure you obtain the receipt in English and submit your claim when you return home.



Our find a dentist service isn't just for emergencies you can use it anytime to find a dentist close to work or home. Give it a go by visiting www.denplan.co.uk/findadentist

Smileguide *competition*

Answer all four
questions correctly
for your chance
to receive a goody
worth £45!



For your chance of winning your goody bag,
please visit www.denplan.co.uk/smilequiz

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