



11 February 2019

Brits not feeling the love for their smile

It may be Valentine's Day next week, but Brits are feeling a distinct lack of love for their smile and oral health, according to research from Simplyhealth, the experts behind Denplan payment plans.

Figures from across two Simplyhealth surveys reveal that UK adults are feeling self-conscious of their smiles, giving brushing and flossing the cold shoulder, not seeing their dentist regularly, and having a love affair with sugar – several of which could also hamper their romantic efforts this Valentine's Day.

Self-conscious smiles

With 39% of UK adultsⁱ saying a person's smile is the first thing they notice when they first meet someone, being confident of your smile is arguably important, especially on a first date. However, the same survey revealed that 75% of UK adults said they are conscious of their smile, which may prove a dampener this Valentine's Day. Five percent said they have even avoided going on dates or setting up online dating profiles due to feeling so self-conscious of their pearly whites.

“With the rise of the perceived perfect ‘Instagram’ smile, people are increasingly feeling self-conscious of their teeth,” says Catherine Rutland, dentist and Head of Professional Support Services at Simplyhealth. “The reality is that teeth are rarely naturally very white and perfectly straight. It's important to ensure the health of

your teeth, first and foremost, through a good oral health routine and visiting your dentist regularly. Healthy teeth and gums are essential to feeling confident in your smile. If there are any cosmetic tweaks you'd like to make, such as teeth whitening, always speak to your dentist for the most suitable option for you."

Oral health and bad breath

For many people, the freshness of their breath goes hand in hand with how confident they feel about their smile. When it comes to their oral health, one in ten UK adults (13%)ⁱ say that they care most about having fresh breath. However, according to another survey from Simplyhealth and YouGovⁱⁱ, the nation's oral health habits could be scuppering their chances of fresh breath. A quarter of UK adults (26%) only brush their teeth once a day, and 2% of adults admit to never brushing at all! Furthermore, a huge 37% of adults say they never floss, even though 45% agree that it helps to avoid bad breath.

"A thorough brushing and flossing routine is essential for good oral health," says Catherine. "This helps to reduce your chances of tooth decay, gum disease, bad breath, and other general conditions that can be linked to poor oral health. Everyone should be aiming to brush for two minutes, twice a day. Brushing alone only reaches around 70 percent of tooth surfaces, so make sure you're cleaning between your teeth every day to remove plaque and food particles stuck between your teeth, as these will start to smell as they break down, contributing to bad breath. Other causes of bad breath include severe gum disease, diet, smoking and hydration levels. Always speak to your dentist for advice if you notice regular bad breath."

Almost one in ten give the dentist the cold shoulder

According to Simplyhealth's researchⁱⁱ, an encouraging 76% of adults visit the dentist at least once every two years. Worryingly though, almost one in ten adults (8%) say they only visit when in pain, and 7% admit they never visit. Furthermore, over half (51%) said that they would cancel a dental appointment if they had

financial worries. However, your dental appointment is a date that you certainly shouldn't cancel, according to Catherine.

“Despite our busy lifestyles, it's important that everyone visits the dentist at least once every two years,” says Catherine. “Not only are they checking your tooth and gum health, they are also looking for signs of more serious conditions such as mouth cancer and diabetes.”

Sweet enough

With the average Brit gobbling a staggering 7.5kg of chocolate each year (equivalent to 167 small bars)ⁱⁱⁱ, Valentine's chocolates may be a popular gift choice for your significant other. However, with a whopping one in five UK adults (20%)ⁱⁱ admitting they are addicted to sugar, it might be best to stick to flowers this February.

“To help protect your oral health, chocolates and other sugary items are best enjoyed as occasional treats,” says Catherine. “Frequent exposure to sugar is a direct cause of tooth decay, and it's tempting to graze on boxes of chocolates throughout the day. If you're having something sweet, include it as part of a meal to limit how often your teeth are exposed to sugar.”

ENDS

ⁱ 3Gem survey of 2,000 UK adults for Simplyhealth, March 2018

ⁱⁱ *Online survey conducted by YouGov on behalf of Simplyhealth. Total sample size was 5,264 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 12th -19th February 2018. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.statista.com/chart/3668/the-worlds-biggest-chocolate-consumers/>

For more information:

Sara Elliott

Consumer Press & PR Officer

Sara.elliott@simplyhealth.co.uk

01962 828 194

About Simplyhealth

Since 1872 we've been helping people get healthcare through our health plans, charity partnerships and by being a voice in healthcare.

Today we're delighted to be the UK's leading provider of health plans, Denplan payment plans and pet health plans, which help individuals, families, employees and pets to get support with their health when they need it.

We don't have shareholders which means we are totally focused on making sure no one goes without the healthcare support they need, and why we are passionate about being a voice in healthcare and partnering with charities to reduce health inequality.

Last year we donated £1.13 million to our charity partners which equates to over 10% of our pre-tax profits. Additionally, our partnership with the Simplyhealth Great Run Series raised over £40 million for charitable causes.

To find out more visit www.simplyhealth.co.uk

Dental

Simplyhealth Professionals is the UK's leading dental payment plan specialist with more than 6,500 member dentists nationwide caring for approximately 1.7 million patients registered to a Denplan product.

Simplyhealth Professionals provides the following range of leading Denplan dental payment plans under the Denplan name:

- Denplan Care: all routine and restorative care + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan Essentials: routine care only + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan for Children: routine and other agreed care + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan Membership: registered with the dentist + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan Hygiene: A dental payment plan without dental insurance for all types of practice from NHS, mixed and private to support patients commit to a consistent hygiene programme.
- Denplan Emergency Insurance: worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover only

Simplyhealth Professionals also provide a wide range of professional services for its member dentists and their practice teams, including the Denplan Quality Programme and Denplan Excel Accreditation Programme. Plus regulatory advice, business and marketing consultancy services and networking opportunities.

Dentist enquiries telephone: 0800 169 9962.

For patient enquiries telephone: 0800 401 402

www.simplyhealth.co.uk

www.simplyhealthprofessionals.co.uk