

Looking after your mouth and teeth

Maintaining good dental health is really important when we get older. Many medical conditions and medicines, can affect your mouth and it may become more difficult for you to care for your mouth yourself.

To keep your mouth healthy:

Visit a dentist regularly. Your dentist will advise on prevention or treatment that you need. If you have a dry mouth, are diabetic, having chemotherapy or on bisphosphonate medication it is important to have regular checks ideally before you start treatment.

If you have dementia it is better to have any dental treatment early in your condition and your dentist can help you plan for the future.

Ask your dentist to prescribe high fluoride toothpaste and fluoride varnish. This is particularly helpful if you have medicines that make your mouth dry or have another long-term condition.

Get help cleaning your teeth. If you have difficulty keeping your mouth clean then ask for help. There are a range of tools that can help like 3-way toothbrushes and you may need someone to help you to clean your mouth. Saliva substitutes can help if you have a dry mouth and lip balm if your lips are dry and sore.



Who can help?

Your care agency will work with you, your family and dentist to help you care for your mouth and teeth. This leaflet outlines who is responsible for different aspects of your dental care, what you're entitled to and what you need to do.

Our commitment to you. We will:

- Assess your needs and put in your care plan any support that you need to care for your mouth and teeth.
- Ensure that you have the things that you need to look after your mouth (e.g. toothbrush, toothpaste, denture cleaner).
- Put your initials on your denture to identify it if it is ever mislaid.
- Arrange for high fluoride toothpaste to be used regularly if your dentist prescribes this to prevent dental problems.
- Arrange for you to visit a dentist if needed.
- Complete form HC1 (SC) (partly or fully funded care) or HC1 (self-funded care) on your behalf if you are unable to do so. This will ensure you receive the correct NHS dental charge exemptions.
- Arrange transport to and from a dentist.
- Arrange for a friend, family member or a member of staff to accompany you to the dentist if needed and clarify any charges for this.

What we need from you and your family

Whether you are living at home or in a nursing or care home you and your family are responsible for:

- Looking after your mouth if you are able to do this.
- Paying for your toothbrush, toothpaste and any dental brushes, mouthwashes.
- Paying for transport to and from a dentist.
- Accompanying you if you need someone to accompany you.
- Paying for your dental treatment unless you are exempt or unless you are in hospital.
- You may be able to get help with NHS charges – information is available on www.nhs.uk

Dental Care

Your dentist will provide:

- Appointments for people who need them when they have capacity to do this. Sometimes practices are full and won't be able to take on new patients at a particular time.
- If you need additional time or specialist facilities your dentist will arrange for this or if this isn't possible refer you to a dentist who can provide this.
- An assessment of your dental health needs and a plan tailored to your needs. This might include advanced prevention like a prescription for high fluoride toothpaste or fluoride varnish. It will also include any treatment needed and a plan for this to be done given any health conditions that you have.

Dentists can't provide:

- Transport to the dental surgery
- Home visits are only provided in exceptional circumstances (e.g. end of life) when someone is unable to transfer to a wheelchair and is 100% housebound.
- For safety reasons dentists can only provide very basic care at your home e.g. easing dentures.



To find a dentist:

If you don't already have a dentist then visit www.nhs.uk for a list of dentists near you who are taking on new NHS patients.



Mouth & Dental Care

Information for people receiving
Social care and their families