

Oral health

Looking after their teeth for life

To have a great smile and look good, they need to look after their teeth. Tooth decay occurs when bacteria in the mouth break down sugar to cause an acid attack, which then dissolves the teeth. How often we eat sugary foods or drinks can affect how much the teeth decay.

“Reduce the risk of tooth decay by having fewer sugary foods and drinks less often.”

Switch to water and milk where possible. Swap fizzy drinks for sugar-free drinks and drink through a straw to avoid erosion.

Brushing twice a day with a family toothpaste will prevent decay and keep their breath fresh. Avoid bad breath which is also known as halitosis, by brushing away the plaque carefully twice daily and especially at night, no one wants to kiss someone with halitosis! Brush right up to and under all the gum margins - everywhere!

If they have decay in their tooth tell them to visit the dentist straight away. Missing or bad teeth look really bad!

Some people worry about the colour of their teeth. Teeth will appear whiter if they are clean and against slightly darker lip gloss or make up.

Oral health and young people

Smoking has a bad effect on their mouth. It turns teeth yellow, causes bad breath and damages gums and increases risk of mouth cancer. Illegal drugs can also damage teeth and gums.

Keeping sugary foods to mealtimes will help reduce dental decay.

“Eating disorders and repeated vomiting can lead to tooth problems.”

Braces can trap plaque. A special brush can be recommended by their dentist.

Sexual practices such as unprotected oral sex can lead to getting a virus which can lead to mouth cancer. Using a dental dam or condoms during oral sex can help prevent this.

Mouth piercing can cause mouth damage, infections, nerve damage and speech problems. Damage to the teeth can occur.

Dentist says

- Cut down on sugar particularly between meals.
- Brush twice daily for 2 minutes, especially last thing at night.
- Use a fluoride toothpaste and spit don't rinse (so fluoride is not diluted).
- Visit a dentist regularly.
- Avoid smoking.

Contacts

www.nhs.uk/livewell/dentalhealth

British Dental Health Foundation

01788 539780

www.dentalhealth.org

Getting it on

Sutton sexual health, drugs & alcohol services for teenagers.

www.gettingiton.org.uk

South West London Sexual Health Services

www.swish.nhs.uk/sutton-and-merton/sexual-health-services

School Nurse 020 8661 3904