

Healthy teeth

Making just a few simple changes to what you eat and drink and how you brush your teeth can make a big difference to the health of your mouth, gums and teeth.

For example:

- brushing regularly with a fluoride toothpaste
- cutting down on how often you have sugary food and drinks
- saliva helps clean and protect the teeth -it works more effectively if you have sugary food and drinks as part of a meal
- not smoking or using other tobacco products
- drinking alcohol within limits advised by your GP
- wearing gum shields when playing sport

Visiting your [Dentist](#) regularly is also very important.

Read our information on [healthy eating and drinking](#).

Top tips for looking after our teeth

- brush your teeth twice a day and don't share your toothbrush
- use a dry toothbrush, not a wet one, because it is better at removing bacteria
- brush your gums and teeth
- rinse your toothbrush with water not your mouth
- toothpaste continues to work after you brush if you don't rinse your mouth
- use a pea sized amount of toothpaste

Useful films:

- [Smile – looking after your teeth](#)
 - [Tooth brushing advice](#)
 - [Did you know – sugar smart](#)
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Dental Care for Older People

Older people especially may have concerns about keeping healthy teeth and gums. Gum disease is often the cause of lost teeth, so brush your gums gently and see the dentist if they bleed.

A top tip to help to keep your teeth healthy is to eat a small piece of hard cheese (such as cheddar) after a meal. This neutralises the acids that promote tooth decay and even helps to re-mineralise your teeth.

Older people who don't have their own teeth are more likely to be malnourished than those who do, so it pays to hang on to your teeth for as long as you can.

The [Oral Health Foundation's](#) information on [dental care for older people](#) may answer questions you have about issues such as:

- losing your teeth
 - wearing dentures
 - and what to do about dental checks if you're housebound
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Dentures

If you wear dentures, make sure that they fit properly. Your jaws will change as you get older, so dentures need to be changed from time to time. Loose dentures will increase damage to your gums and bone structure, and will increase the risk of breakage, so you should have your dentures inspected by a dentist at least once every two years.

Dentures can last for twenty years or more, but they usually start to lose their function after about two years. Their lifespan depends on the quality of your dentures, your age, your general health, and whether you have had any drastic change in your weight.

Remember, dentures shouldn't hurt and they don't need to be uncomfortable. See your dentist if you are experiencing these kind of problems.

Dentists

Have regular check-ups with your dentist. Do not put off going for a check-up. Detecting problems early can mean they're easier to treat. If problems are not treated, they may lead to damage that's harder, or even impossible, to repair.

[You can read more about how to find a dentist, community and emergency dental care on InformationNOW](#)

Other Useful Organisations

- [The NHS Healthy Start Scheme](#) is for people who are more than 10 weeks pregnant, or have children under the age of 4, who receive certain benefits. You get a free prepaid card that's topped up every 4 weeks to buy: milk, fruit and vegetables. You can also collect free vitamins from [locations listed here](#). You can use the card in shops that accept Mastercard payments and sell at least one of these Healthy Start foods.
- [NHS 111](#) can help when you need medical or dental help fast but it's not a 999 emergency.
- [NHS.UK](#) is a website providing health and medical advice, an online symptom checker and a facility for searching for services near you.

Please note – The content on this website is provided for general information only, and should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of your own doctor or any other health care professional. If you are feeling unwell, make an appointment to see your GP or contact [NHS 111](#). In an emergency, dial **999**.

Last updated: April 2, 2025

Useful Organisations

Oral Health Foundation

Email: helpline@dentalhealth.org

Website: www.dentalhealth.org

Telephone: 01788 546 365

Address: Smile House, CV22 6AJ

Out of Hours Dental Emergency and Advisory Service

Website: <https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/services/dental-emergency-clinic/>

Telephone: 111

Newcastle dental hospital

Website: <https://www.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/hospitals/dental-hospital/>

Telephone: 0191 282 4664

Address: Dental Hospital, NE2 4AZ

NHS 111

Website: www.nhs.uk/111

Telephone: 0191 282 4664

Healthy Start Scheme

Email: healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

Website: <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk>

Telephone: 0191 282 4664

Address: Healthy Start, NE1 6SN

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