

Periodontal Disease and General Health

Research has shown that periodontal (gum) disease is associated with several other diseases, most notably diabetes and heart disease. Stress is also a major contributing factor too. If you suffer from any of these conditions it is extremely important to advise your dentist. Sessions with our hygienist may be recommended

Oral Cancer

Oral cancer is the 3rd most common cancer worldwide and the 15th most common cancer in the UK. Your dentist will check for signs of oral cancer at each examination. This is why it is important to attend for regular check ups even if you don't have any teeth. Most oral cancers are linked to smoking and alcohol. Smoking and drinking together increases the risk. Reducing your consumption of both decreases your risk.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is also a risk factor. HPV can be contracted through oral sex. Practicing safe sex and limiting the number of partners you have decreases your risk. A diet rich in vitamins A, C and E provides protection against oral cancer.

If you have an ulcer, red or white patch in your mouth that doesn't disappear after 3 weeks you should get it checked by your dentist

Smoking

Smoking damages the teeth and gums. It causes staining, gum disease, tooth loss and more seriously oral cancer.

If you want help and advice on quitting smoking ask your dentist or call the national free stop smoking advice line on **0800 84 84 84** available Monday – Friday 9am -5pm

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you are worried about your own or somebody else's drinking you can call for free and in confidence **0800 731 4314** 9am-9pm Monday -Friday and 10am-4pm at weekends.



A Short Guide to Oral Health

www.forthvalleysmiledesign.co.uk

reception@forthvalleysmiledesign.co.uk

374 Main Street Stenhousemuir

01324 552892

6 Weir Street Falkirk

01324 621495

Tooth Decay, Plaque and Erosion

Plaque is a sticky, colourless film of bacteria and sugar that constantly forms on our teeth. It is the main cause of cavities (holes) and gum disease and can harden to form calculus (tartar) if not removed daily.

After eating and drinking anything containing sugar, acids from the plaque attack and soften the teeth. These attacks can last for an hour after eating or drinking before the natural salts in your saliva cause the teeth to harden again.

Dental erosion is the loss of tooth enamel due to acid attack. Food and drinks that contain acid such as fruit juice, fizzy drinks, smoothies, energy drinks, citrus fruits and fruit teas can all cause dental erosion if you have them often enough.

Limiting the number of times a day you expose your teeth to sugar or acid will help to reduce and prevent tooth decay and erosion

Diet tips for Teeth

Limit sugar and acid containing foods and drinks to meal times only

Drink only water, milk, tea or coffee (without sugar) between meals

Drink fizzy drinks through a straw

Don't sip sugar containing or acidic drinks over a prolonged period of time

Diet versions of drinks don't contain sugar but are very acidic

Chew sugar free gum for 20 minutes or have a small cube of cheese after eating to help neutralise plaque acids

Drinks containing sugars such as sweetened milk, soy formula and fruit juice increase the risk of tooth decay **Do not put these in feeding bottles**

Tooth friendly snacks include raw vegetables, breadsticks, oatcakes, cheese and nut

Tooth Brushing

Teeth should be brushed twice a day, morning and before bed, using a fluoride containing toothpaste. The before bed brush is the most important one.

- Under 3 years use a smear of toothpaste of 1000ppm Fluoride
- 3-6 years use a pea size amount of 1000-1500ppm Fluoride
- 7+ use a pea size amount of 1350-1500 ppm Fluoride toothpaste

Children under 7 need help brushing and parents/carers need to take responsibility

Electric/battery operated brushes used properly remove more plaque than manual brushes and can be used from ages 3 and above.

After brushing spit, don't rinse! If you rinse straight after brushing you will lose the benefit.

Mouthwash (if used) shouldn't be used straight after brushing either.

Disclosing tablets can be used to highlight where plaque is on teeth. It can be quite an eye opener! Chew before brushing to guide you where to brush or afterwards to check you've removed all the plaque. Interdental brushes can be easier to use than floss and are particularly helpful if you have receding gums.