



WORD OF MOUTH

MAGAZINE



**Oral Health
Foundation**
Better oral health for all

ISSUE 91 | JUNE 2020 This month we continue to raise awareness about the importance of good oral health during National Smile Month. We have also issued some new advice about what to expect when visiting the dentist post lockdown.

Editor's Welcome

Hello and welcome to a brand-new issue of Word of Mouth – the Oral Health Foundation's digital magazine.

Firstly, from everybody at the Oral Health Foundation, we hope you and your loved ones are safe, healthy and in good spirit in what is an extremely difficult time.

Following a two-and-a-half-month closure, dental practices were given the green light to re-open in England on 8 June. This is undoubtedly good news and a relief for many of us as patients. Dental practices have been working hard to make the necessary changes to make our visits as safe and comfortable as possible.

It's not quite business as usual. The amount of treatments on offer might be limited and the number of patients that can be seen will be reduced. In this issue, we have summarised some of the most important changes so that you are able to know to expect upon your next dental visit.

During June, we have also been campaigning as part of National Smile Month. We have continued to reach out to vulnerable groups and individuals, to support them with their oral health. We have done this safely with digital resources and online toolkits. Our Dental Helpline has also received a staggering amount of calls from people looking for advice and reassurance.

Please enjoy this edition of Word of Mouth and thank you once again for your ongoing support.



David Arnold
Editor, Word of Mouth



4 Returning to dental visits after lockdown



"We can do more" on childhood tooth decay, says oral health charity

20

8 12 million Brits move to electric toothbrushes

10 Nationwide poll reveals UK public back calls to extend sugar tax

14 One in eight children suffer from nightmares about their teeth

16 Why a white smile should also be a healthy smile

23 Millennials spending more than three times the national average on their smiles

26 Oral Health Foundation top tips: How to clean your teeth

30 Lockdown leading to increased snacking culture

Contents



Dentistry Returns

One of the many knock-on effects caused by COVID-19 has been the impact on oral health. Specifically, visiting the dentist.

On 24 March, the coronavirus pandemic forced all dental practices in the UK to close, except for a number of emergency treatment stations. For the next 2 months and 15 days, thousands of people had their appointments cancelled and treatments postponed.

This changed on 8 June, when dental practices in England were given the green light to reopen their doors.

Just like the retail sector, dental practices have needed to adapt to their previously 'normal' day-to-day routine. To help them reopen safely, dental practices have been handed a series of recommendations based on the latest evidence.

Any changes have been made to make your experience as safe and comfortable as possible. Here's a summary of what you might expect.

Changes on arrival

Before you visit your dentist, all dental practices will be contacting you to check whether you feel well. They will be asking you a few questions about your health

and the health of the people you live with. Nobody with any signs of COVID-19 will be able to visit the dental practice.

Appointments can only be made by telephone and dental practices ask that you do not visit them without an appointment. As a precaution, you may find their doors will be locked. If they are, ring the bell or give the reception a call and they will let you inside.

Arrive alone and on time (rather than early), to minimise time in the waiting room.

While waiting

When you arrive at reception, a few things will be different. The first might be that a member of staff is waiting for you to check your temperature.

The next noticeable change on arrival might be that you will be asked to sanitise your hands. This will be provided for you. There will also be a protective barrier at reception – much like what you now see when shopping.

You may be asked to wear a protective face mask and even

shoe covers. Some practices may also ask that you put any belongings in a clean bag.

When you enter the waiting room you will notice that it has been reorganised for social distancing. Be reassured that it is cleaned frequently and anything that isn't easy to disinfect has already been removed.

Changes to how dental teams work

The most important thing to know in the wake of coronavirus, is how dental teams are making sure you are safe during treatment.

Firstly, the treatment room will be well ventilated. You will see that the dental team is wearing extra protective equipment, like PPE. As always, their equipment is fully sterilised.

The little sink next to the chair may also be removed or covered up. This means no rinsing. Instead, your mouth will be cleared with suction.

All dental practices will be using equipment and techniques with a lower risk of spray. Emergency procedures, which produce high



What you need to know about your oral health and COVID-19

levels of spray, will be done in a different room.

Non-urgent procedures may be delayed, and dental practices are allowing more time between patients. This allows them to thoroughly clean the treatment room between patients.

When you are leaving

The final changes during the new dental practice experience, is when you leave.

Firstly, it is safer to pay with a contactless card if you can, and use your own pen to sign any paperwork.

Usually, you might be handed a piece of paper or leaflet with advice or instructions about your treatment. In the short term, this will no longer happen. Instead, this information will be texted or emailed to you.

Finally, if you were asked to hand of your belongings on arrival, these will now be returned.

It's important that you, as a patient, are comforted by the measures that are being taken. All changes that have been made for the safety of staff and patients alike.

For those living in other parts of the UK, where dental practices remain closed, it is likely that many of these measures will be taken once your practices have been okayed to resume activity.

If in doubt, call your dental practice and ask them what changes they have made to your routine appointment. They will be able to put your mind at ease and reassure you.

Alternatively, you can get in touch with our [Dental Helpline](#), who have been supporting thousands of others over the last few months.

As of 8 June, dental practices in England were given the green light to re-open. But a few things will look a little different.

To create a safe and comfortable environment, dental practices have made a number of changes that will affect your visit.

Find out more about about dental visits after lockdown at...

www.dentalhealth.org/coronavirus

Why 12 million Brits have moved to electric toothbrushes

The number of British adults cleaning their teeth with an electric toothbrush has surpassed those using a manual one for the first time, according to new findings.



New data shows that nearly 12 million people in the UK have switched to an electric toothbrush over the last five years.

Around two-in-three (67%) adults now use an electric toothbrush – an estimated 34 million people – an increase of 52%.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation, believes as the science behind the advantages of electric toothbrushes mounts, the decision whether to invest in one becomes much easier.

Dr Carter says: “The strong and clear evidence is that electric toothbrushes are better for our oral health.

“Electric toothbrushes, especially those with heads that rotate in both directions, or ‘oscillating’ heads, are more effective at removing plaque than a manual brush. This helps keep tooth decay and gum disease at bay.

“As technology has developed, the cost of having an electric toothbrush becomes even more

affordable. Battery-powered toothbrushes are available for as little as £10 while electric brushes can be had for as little as £40. Whilst at the other end of the spectrum there are top end power brushes which have all the latest innovations such as artificial intelligence.

“Given the advantages of electric toothbrushes, having one is an excellent investment and could really benefit the health of your mouth.”

Recent data in the Journal of Clinical Periodontology, found that electric toothbrushes led to 22% less gum recession and 18% less tooth decay over the 11-year period.

The charity’s research shows that nearly half (45%) make the switch to electric brushes because they believe it cleans better than a manual brush. More than one-in-four (27%) invest in an electric toothbrush on the advice of their dentist.

Technology also seems to be a growing trend for why

people have moved to electric toothbrushes. Around one-in-seven (18%) buy an electric toothbrush because of features like in-built timers or that they can be connected to apps which keep a track on how well you are brushing. Others simply enjoy having it as a gadget.

Eva Castro Perea, Professional & Academic Manager, Oral-B believes new technology has allowed more people to take a greater interest in the health of their mouth.

Eva says: “Over the last five years we have seen tremendous advances in oral healthcare technology. There are now electric toothbrushes that alert you to areas in the mouth you have missed, or let you know if you are brushing too hard, or not hard enough.

“Knowing more about your brushing habits allows you to be a more effective brusher, which will in turn give you a healthier mouth.

“Other features such as in-built

timers, allow users to track two minutes in a more reliable way. This is especially important for children and has been shown to be an excellent motivator.”

The charity says whether you currently use an electric toothbrush or not, it is important that are following a good oral health routine.

Dr Carter adds: “If you follow a good oral health routine then whether you use a manual or electric toothbrush, you’ll have a healthy mouth either way.

“That means brushing for two minutes, twice a day, with a fluoride toothpaste. Brushing should be done last thing at night and at one other time during the day. A daily oral health routine would not be complete without cleaning in between your teeth with floss or interdental brushes and using mouthwash. Both can help to remove plaque bacteria from the mouth and keep your teeth and gums healthy.”

New polls reveals UK public back calls to extend the **sugar tax**

Most of the British public are in favour of extending the Soft Drinks Industry Levy, as known as the sugar tax.

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The sugar tax has been a significant success, not only for oral health, but for general health and wellbeing too. The more sugar we can continue to cut from drinks, the healthier our population will be.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE

Chief Executive
Oral Health Foundation



Data collected by the Oral Health Foundation as part of National Smile Month, shows that 61% of the United Kingdom support an expansion of the current sugar tax.

Milkshakes, fruit juices, smoothies and alcoholic mixers, which are exempt under the current sugar tax, all received equal backing as possible routes for an extension.

A previous report looking into some of the drinks exempt from the sugar tax found that half contain a child's entire recommended daily sugar intake, which is almost 19g or nearly five teaspoons.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation, believes the Soft Drinks Industry

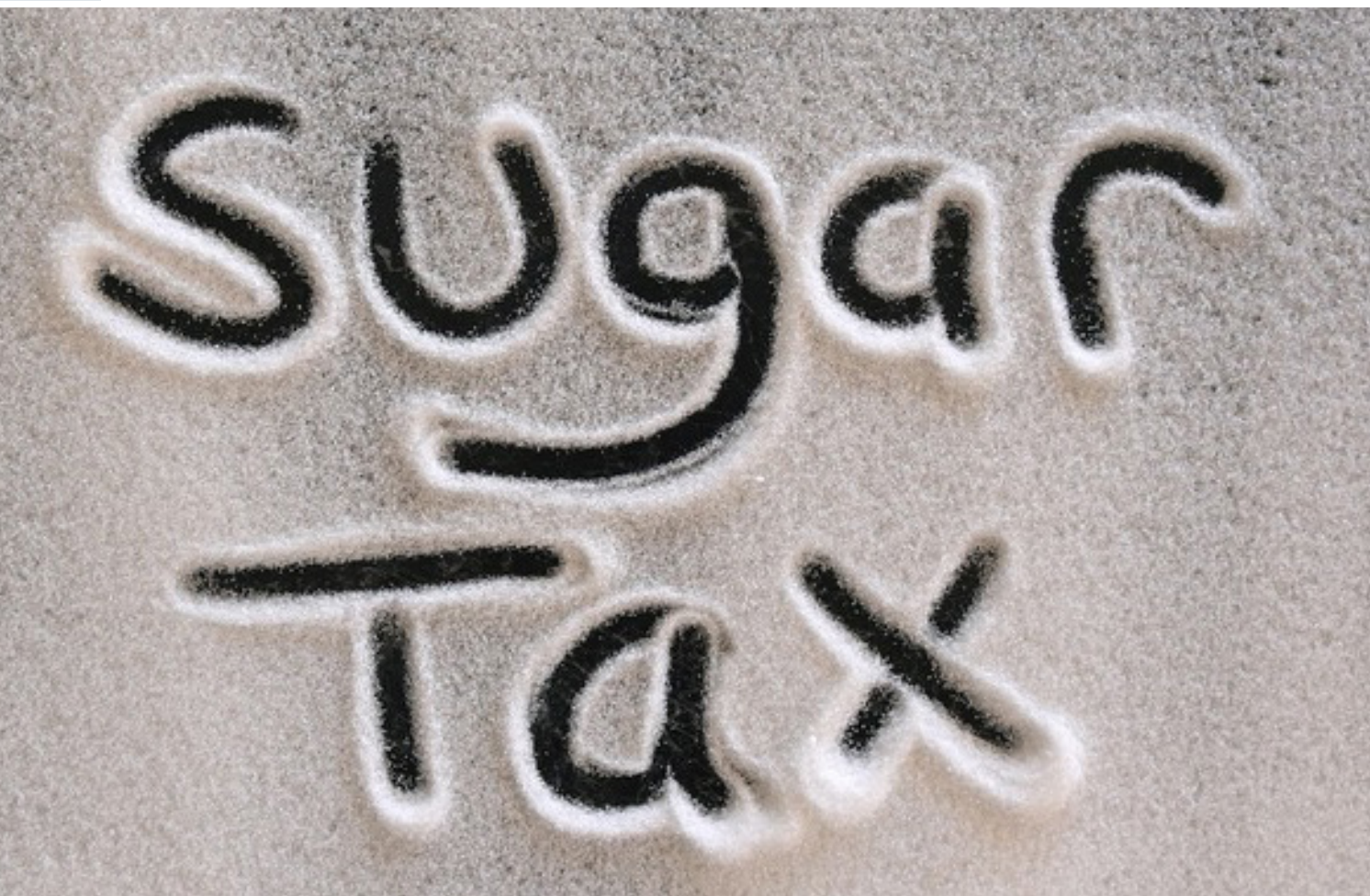
Levy has had a positive impact on the nation's health and supports calls to extend the sugar tax further.

Dr Carter says: "The sugar tax has been a significant success, not only for oral health, but for general health and wellbeing too. The more sugar we can continue to cut from drinks, the healthier our population will be. It will allow more of us to be free of the diseases and conditions linked to sugar, and it will also save the NHS millions every year.

"The lack of progress by government to build on the current sugar tax proposals has been extremely disappointing. A blind eye has been turned to addressing pure fruit juices, smoothies and milkshakes. These drinks are crammed with sugar and highly dangerous to a person's health.

"Expanding the sugar tax to include milkshakes, smoothies and fruit juices is a relatively small step but the impact it could have would be enormous."

The sugar tax was introduced two years ago and applies to drinks with more than 8g



Every penny goes towards helping people achieve a healthy smile

of added sugar per 100ml.

The tax forced manufacturers to lower their sugar content or face a tax rate equivalent to 24p per litre. As a result, many of them did. So much so that the new levy brought £800m less than it was forecast to.

Since then, the sugar content of drinks sold has fallen by 21.6% - equating to more than 30,000 tonnes of sugar a year.

“The impact that sugar has on teeth is horrific,” adds Dr Carter. “It is why one-in-three adults in the UK have tooth decay and it is the reason why around 35,000 children are admitted to hospital each year.

“Whenever you eat or drink anything containing sugars, the enamel and dentine of your tooth is softened. Over time, this create a hole (cavity) in the tooth and leads to tooth decay.

“The result is often a filling but in more severe cases it leads to tooth loss.”

During National Smile Month, the Oral Health Foundation is challenging you to cut your added sugar intake.

The charity says swapping sugary foods and drinks for healthier alternatives is one of the easiest and most satisfying ways you can achieve better oral health.

Everybody deserves to have good oral health.

By donating to the Oral Health Foundation you are helping the most vulnerable people to achieve a healthier life through better oral health.

Every penny counts. Please donate today.

www.dentalhealth.org/donate



1-in-8 children have nightmares about their teeth

Almost one-in-eight (12%) children have woken up from a nightmare about their oral health, according to the findings of a new study.

The data, collected from around 1,500 British parents, suggests that today's children are over ten times more likely to suffer from bad dreams about their teeth than an adult.

The investigation by Oral Health Foundation, points to nightmares about the mouth being more common in earlier years – affecting nearly one-in-five (18%) children aged five and under.

Further findings show almost one-in-two (47%) children have expressed anxieties about their oral health to their parents. This number rises for children under five.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation, believes younger children are becoming more conscious of the appearance of their teeth, which is causing unnecessary and harmful stress.

Dr Carter says: "It is really common for children between the ages of three and five to suffer from nightmares. This is the time when their imagination begins to develop and, along with the experiences they collect throughout the day, can influence the state of their dreams.

"Younger children are being exposed to more television and social media, where the aesthetics of smile do not represent what can be considered normal or naturally-achievable. This paints a false image of what their teeth should look like and can create lasting insecurities.

"With more video calls to family and friends, especially during lockdown, children are also seeing themselves on screen far more often. This too makes them more conscious of their appearance."

The new study also found that nearly one-in-five (18%) children under five have opened up to their parents about not liking their smile. The charity is extremely concerned by the findings, that also show more one-in-four (29%) children under five have spoken to their parents about changing the appearance of their smile.

The new research has been conducted by the Oral Health Foundation as part of National Smile Month, a campaign that aims to raise awareness around the value of having good oral health. As part of the campaign, the charity is giving advice to parents and families about how to maintain a healthy smile.

"The best approach to tackle any insecurities a child has about their smile is to introduce children to oral health education at the earliest age possible," adds Dr Carter. "By teaching children basic lessons about oral health, why we have teeth and how to keep them clean, we reassure them that the best teeth are not necessarily the straightest or whitest, but the ones that are healthy.

"There are so many online learning programmes and activities that can make oral health education fun and appealing. By teaching children at home about how to achieve good oral health you can help boost their confidence and reduce any anxieties they may have about their smile."

The Oral Health Foundation's Dental Buddy programme has games, lesson plans and activities for children from Early Years Foundation Stage, up to Key Stage 2. It can be downloaded for free on the [charity's website](#).

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With more video calls to family and friends, especially during lockdown, children are also seeing themselves on screen far more often.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE
Chief Executive
Oral Health Foundation

Why a white smile should also be a healthy smile

A straight and white smile is becoming more sought after than ever before. This mindset began with the 'Hollywood smile', when we first started to develop an interest in mimicking the results of celebrity cosmetics. For many at the time, the riches of these stars along with the price of cosmetic dentistry, put such procedures out of reach. But much has changed.

Today, the price of cosmetic dentistry, like tooth whitening and adult orthodontics have become far more affordable and accessible. It means today's Hollywood smile is now the 'Love Island smile'. As a reality show, this creates an image that cosmetic dentistry is obtainable and as 'normal' as visiting the hairdresser or barber.

More of us are taking an interest in our own smile and searching for ways to improve it. This is an extremely positive attitude. However, while changing the appearance of our teeth sits high on many people's wish list, it is important to remember the most important thing – the health of our smile.



New research

To get a better understanding of how we view our smiles, we teamed up with Philips Sonicare to commission a brand new piece of research. And the results of the investigation are eye-opening.

One-in-five (20%) British adults have had cosmetic

dentistry – and nearly one-in-ten (9%) have had it in the last year alone. What's more, another 19% of the population say they are looking into cosmetic dental work with the intention of having it one day soon.

Unsurprisingly, tooth whitening came top of the dental makeover shopping list. Nearly one-in-three (32%) Brits want whiter teeth while two-in-three (66%) have actively considered it.

One of the main concerns from our investigation is that whiter teeth is considered more than twice as desirable as having healthy gums. This is a problem.

A white smile can also be a healthy one

There is a need for us to readdress our perceptions of what a healthy smile. It's important to remember that with the introduction of cosmetic dentistry, all may not be what it seems, and a white smile is not necessarily a healthy one.

White teeth as a result of tooth whitening are still susceptible to tooth decay, and the gums are still prone to disease.

Just as white teeth can improve our self-esteem, suffering from tooth loss can have the opposite effect. Strong evidence is also pointing to gum disease linking to wider conditions such as heart disease, strokes, diabetes and dementia. The health of our mouth isn't only important for the state of our smile, it is also incredibly influential for our quality of life.

It all means we need to strike a better balance. Of course, we can still have our teeth whitened, but we need to realise that the health of our teeth is far more important than the colour.



Your mouth matters. The Oral Health Foundation is here for you.

We care about your oral health.

That's why, every year, we support thousands of people to help them achieve a healthier life through better oral health.

If you need help, or would simply like to support us in our mission, visit our website and get in touch.

www.dentalhealth.org

How to keep a healthy mouth

So how do we achieve a healthy smile? The good news is that the answer is pretty simple. Healthy teeth and gums can be achieved by a good oral health routine at home and regularly visiting our dentist.

Having a good oral health routine only involves a few easy steps:

- Brushing our teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste for two minutes. This is best done last thing at night and one other time during the day.
- Cleaning in between our teeth daily with interdental brushes or floss.
- Using mouthwash daily.
- Chewing sugar free gum in between meals.

- Cutting down how much sugar we have, and how often we have it – and keeping sugar consumption to mealtimes.
- Visiting our dentist as often as they recommend.

So there we have it.

By sticking to this basic routine, we can achieve that healthy mouth. The next time we show off the results of our latest tooth whitening treatment, we can also be confident that our teeth and gums are in tip-top condition too.

For more information on how to maintain good oral health check out our A-Z of oral health information. Alternatively, if you have an oral health query or issue that you would like advice on then consider calling our [Dental Helpline](tel:01788539780) on 01788 539780.



Leading health charity says “we can do more” as campaigners look to address childhood decay

Leading charity, the Oral Health Foundation, is calling for a united effort to take action against the ongoing issue of childhood tooth decay.

The concern for the oral health and general wellbeing of children has been prompted by the release of new statistics from Public Health England (PHE) that reveal around one-in-four (23%) of 5-year-olds in 2019 have had dental decay.

These findings are identical to the results of the previous survey in 2017 which suggests that no progress has been made towards tackling an unacceptable level of childhood tooth decay in England.

Speaking on the need to address these figures, Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation said: “In 2020 and the years to come, we can make progress to tackle a heart-breaking level of childhood tooth decay and protect the future of the nation’s oral health.

“No child should be born into a world where they have a one-in-four chance of having decayed teeth on their fifth birthday.

“Over the last decade, we have seen significant progress to reduce the rate of childhood tooth decay, however it is disappointing to see advances come to a halt in recent years and far too many children are suffering needlessly.

“Tooth decay is almost entirely preventable,



yet it remains the number one reason for childhood hospital admissions for general anaesthesia in the UK.

“We can put an end to this by making positive dietary changes. Reducing how much and how often children have sugar while introducing healthier foods like fruits and vegetables can help them avoid tooth decay and obesity.

“Brushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste is also absolutely essential for people of all ages. It can aid dental health by making tooth enamel stronger and more resistant to tooth decay.

“Introducing water fluoridation schemes could dramatically improve the oral health of children across the nation, especially in the most deprived communities. Currently, less than 10% of the UK population are supplied with fluoridated water and this is not enough to bring about the change that we all want to see.”

The survey conducted by PHE also revealed that children from more deprived areas (34%) are more than twice as likely to have dental decay compared to those from less deprived areas (14%).

“At the Oral Health Foundation, we strongly believe that prevention is better than a cure,” continued Dr Carter.

“We can be part of the solution and help countless children avoid the unnecessary pain and distress caused by this problem.

“Throughout 2020 and beyond, we will continue to promote campaigns like National Smile Month that help foster healthier communities and reduce unacceptable inequalities in oral health.

“Through our range of educational resources, we will continue to give health providers, professionals and public bodies the tools their need to champion oral health across the UK, helping the most vulnerable and at-risk groups.

“These resources can play a vital role in supporting the oral health of children and educating them on how to achieve a healthy smile from an early age.

“You’re never too young to learn about your oral health. Our Dental Buddy programme provides curriculum-based resources that

can help engage children of all ages on the importance of a healthy mouth.

“We cannot do it without you. Your support is crucial to allow us to continue providing vital services, advice and guidance for many people across the UK.

“Together we will change lives across the country for the better by helping people of all ages achieve better oral health.”

For more information on tooth decay and to support the Oral Health Foundation in their mission to bring better oral health to all, visit www.dentalhealth.org.

If you are a dental professional who would like to help us deliver oral health education to schools in your local area please contact us by emailing mail@dentalhealth.org. Alternatively, if you would like to browse our range of educational resources, please head to www.dentalhealthshop.org.

Millennials spending more than **three times** the **national** average on their oral health

New research from a leading UK oral health charity shows millennials outstrip other generations when it comes to spending on their smiles.

Data collected by the Oral Health Foundation shows adults under-35 are spending a staggering £750 a year on dental treatment – more than three times the national average.

Young adults are investing around four times more in oral health treatment than their parents and nearly eight times that of their grandparents.

The statistics have been collected as part of National Smile Month – a campaign which aims to raise awareness about the importance of having good oral health.

The Oral Health Foundation says the gulf in spending highlights the growing popularity of cosmetic dentistry and how the smile is now linked to beauty as much as it is to health.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation, says: “We would all expect to invest a little money in our oral health when visiting the dentist. Whether it is for a regular check-up, scale and polish or



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Cosmetic dentistry can help us achieve a more aesthetically-pleasing smile, but it is key that we continue to invest in our oral health in other ways.

Dr Nigel Carter, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation

minor treatment.

“Younger adults generally experience less oral health problems than their older peers. Common conditions like tooth decay, tooth loss and receding gums are associated with age and result in more expensive treatments. This means the more a young person spends on their oral health, the more likely it is that the work is purely cosmetic and not treating a clinical problem.”

Further findings from the charity’s research show more than half (53%) of under 35s have had cosmetic dental treatment in the UK, compared to less than one-in-ten (9%) over 35.

Tooth whitening is the most popular cosmetic treatment, coming top of the list of treatments in the UK.

More than four-in-ten (42%) under 35s have had a tooth whitening treatment. Almost half (48%) young adults plan to have their teeth whitened within the next year.

Dr Carter adds: “Caring for our teeth and gums has always been about maintaining good health but the aesthetics of a smile are becoming increasingly important. How our smile looks might not only have an impact on our mental wellbeing, but it can shape our confidence and social happiness too.”

As part of National Smile Month, Philips Sonicare are working alongside the Oral Health Foundation to share the message #Habits4Life and encourage everybody that a white smile must also be a healthy one.

Jenny Payne, Professional Relations Manager at Philips Sonicare and registered dental hygienist/therapist says:

“Cosmetic dentistry can help us achieve a more aesthetically-pleasing smile, but it is key that we continue to invest in our oral health in other ways.

“First and foremost, the mouth must be healthy, and this can be done largely at home. Brushing twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste, daily interdental cleaning and daily mouthwash is all that is needed. By spending five minutes a day caring for our mouth we can make sure it remains fit, healthy and clear of disease.

“These are just a few simple habits we can adopt so that our smile is given care it deserves.”

More information about how to achieve a healthy smile is available at www.smilemonth.org.

Alternatively, if you would like to talk to somebody about your oral health, you can contact the Oral Health Foundation’s Dental Helpline on 01788 539780 or by email at helpline@dentalhealth.org.



Top tips for how to clean your teeth

Brushing your teeth twice a day for about 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste is the best thing you can do to keep your teeth and mouth healthy.

This is because brushing removes plaque. If plaque isn't removed, it continues to build up and could lead to a number of oral diseases such as tooth decay and gum disease. Over time, this can lead to tooth loss.

When should I brush my teeth?

It is best to brush your teeth last thing at night, before you go to bed. You should also brush them at one other point during the day.

You should brush your teeth for two minutes. That's all it takes to brush your teeth effectively.

Whether you use a manual toothbrush or an electric one, it's important that you take the time to cover the surfaces of your teeth and all areas of your mouth.

Don't rinse with water straight after brushing

Remember to spit out after brushing and do not rinse your mouth with water. This helps the fluoride stay on your teeth longer.

Electric or manual?

Both manual and electric toothbrushes are effective for keeping your teeth and gums healthy.

Your dental team will be able to recommend a toothbrush suitable for your needs.

Electric toothbrushes have oscillating rotating or vibrating heads. Tests show these toothbrushes are more effective at removing plaque.

Everyone can benefit from an electric brush. They are particularly useful those with limited movement, such as disabled or elderly people.

As many come with mobile apps, they can also be better for children, who are motivated by the interactive nature of using an electric brush.

What should I look for in a toothbrush?

Adults should be looking for a small-to-medium-sized brush head. This should have soft-to-medium, multi-tufted, round-ended nylon bristles or 'filaments'. The head should be small enough to reach all parts of the mouth - especially the back of the mouth where it can be difficult to reach.

Children should use smaller brushes but with the same type of filaments.

It is now possible to buy more specialised toothbrushes. For instance, if you suffer from sensitive teeth, you can now use softer-bristled brushes.

There are also smaller brush heads for those



with irregular-shaped teeth.

Some may also find it difficult to hold a toothbrush, for example because of limited movements or disabilities. There are now toothbrushes which have large handles and angled heads to make them easier to use.

When should I change my toothbrush?

Worn-out toothbrushes cannot clean your teeth properly and may damage your gums.

It is important to change your toothbrush, or toothbrush head (for electric users) every two-to-three months, or sooner if the bristles become worn. When bristles become splayed, they do not clean properly.

How do I pick a toothpaste?

A pea-sized blob of fluoride toothpaste should be used when brushing your teeth.

Everybody older than three-years-old should use a toothpaste with between 1350ppm to 1500ppm of fluoride. This is enough to help strengthen your teeth and protect you from tooth decay.

As well as regular toothpastes, there are many specialised toothpastes. These include tartar control for people who get tartar build-up, and a choice of toothpastes for people with sensitive teeth. 'Total care' toothpastes include ingredients to help fight gum disease, freshen breath and reduce plaque build-up. 'Whitening' toothpastes are good at removing staining to help restore the natural colour of your teeth.



Should I use a mouthwash?

A fluoride mouthwash can help prevent tooth decay. Your dental team may recommend an antibacterial mouthwash to help control plaque and reduce gum disease.

If you find that you are regularly using a mouthwash just to freshen your breath see your dental team, because bad breath can be a sign of unhealthy teeth and gums or of poor general health.

How should I clean between my teeth?

You can clean between your teeth with an 'interdental' brush or dental floss.

Cleaning in between your teeth removes plaque and bits of food from between your teeth and under your gumline - areas a toothbrush can't reach.

When flossing or using interdental brushes, keep to a regular pattern and remember not to miss any teeth. It helps to look in the mirror.

Don't forget the backs of your last teeth. It is also very important to clean around the edges of any crowns, bridges or implants.

You should clean between your teeth at least once a day. Your dental team can show you how to clean between your teeth properly.



IS YOUR MOUTH ON YOUR MIND?

Your oral health matters to us.
Put your mind at ease and reach
out to one of our dental advisors.
We're here to help.

 **Dental
Helpline**
01788 539780
Oral Health Foundation

Anything you want to know about your dental health, our experts are awaiting your call.

Our free and impartial advice centre is open between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.
If you need urgent advice on any oral health issue please give us a call on 01788 539780
(local rate call in the UK), alternatively you can email helpline@dentalhealth.org

Charity worried that lockdown is leading to a snacking culture

The coronavirus pandemic has changed many aspects of life, but it could also be having a significant impact on the health of the mouth, according to a leading charity.

New research by the Oral Health Foundation shows staying at home has led to more than one-in-three (38%) British adults increasing the amount of times they are snacking throughout the day.

Since lockdown, snacking has risen considerably in younger adults. Nearly two-in-three (61%) under 35s admit they are now eating more often in between meals.

Snacking has also risen amongst families with younger children. Seven-in-ten families (70%) with children under five are reporting more snacking in the household.

This is more than double compared with those who are not living with children.

The Oral Health Foundation is worried about the damage snacking in between meals can have on the nation's oral health. The charity's Chief Executive, Dr Nigel Carter OBE, says: "As a nation we have slowly moved away from three square meals and have adopted more snacking habits. This has been worsened during lockdown, as sudden changes to work and family life might have led more people to snack more.

"Snacking could be the result of

boredom and the need to find a distraction that gives us a short-term comfort. The problem is that snacking can have serious repercussions for our health.

"Whenever we eat or drink anything, plaque bacteria builds up in the mouth. This produces acids that attack the teeth, causing tooth decay and erosion. Usually, the mouth can neutralise these acids by producing saliva, however, constant snacking does not give the mouth chance to recover. This leaves us susceptible to acid attacks."

Nearly one-in-three (31%) British

adults have tooth decay while last year 37,000 children visited hospital to have rotten teeth removed.

Today is the start of National Smile Month, a campaign that raises awareness about the importance of having good oral health. As part of the charity campaign, the Oral Health Foundation is encouraging people to be more conscious of their snacking habits and do more to help the mouth recover from acid attacks.

One of easiest and most effective ways to protect teeth and gums in between meals is by chewing sugar free gum. This helps the mouth to produce

more saliva - the mouth's natural defence against acid.

Dr Ben Atkins, President of the Oral Health Foundation, adds: "It is important that we are mindful of the harm snacking can do for our health and take actions to prevent any potential damage.

"By helping us make more saliva, chewing sugar-free gum can help reduce acid attacks in the mouth.

"It normally takes our saliva about an hour to replace the minerals that the enamel has lost. Chewing sugar-free gum for 20 minutes after eating or drinking is a great way to increase the flow of saliva and help replace the minerals more quickly."

During National Smile Month, the Oral Health Foundation and its partners will be supporting the UK to achieve a healthier smile.

The charity will be joined by some of the UK's most well-known household brands, including Listerine, Invisalign, Corsodyl, Pronamel, Oral-B, Philips and the Wrigley Oral Healthcare Programme.

Information and resources about improving your oral health are available to download from the National Smile Month website at www.smilemonth.org.





WORD OF MOUTH

Magazine

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