

Good Oral Health and Prevention of Tooth Decay

One of our main practice aims is to assist and encourage patients to prevent tooth decay. Hopefully for children, this means when they reach adulthood, they will be free of dental disease and avoid treatments such as fillings.

In view of the current advice from the Department of Health, we would like to take prevention a step further by making you aware of the services and techniques available under the NHS that could benefit you and your children.

Oral Health Education

Good brushing plus a low sugar diet is the best way to **prevent** tooth decay. Everyone can benefit from reviewing their brushing technique and the type of additional cleaning aids used.

To help our patients with this, we now have a dedicated Oral Hygiene Educator who is specially trained to advise you in good brushing techniques and diet advice.

For children we will also disclose their teeth to stain the plaque to show where they are missing – please bring your child's toothbrush with them for their visit.

Topical Fluoride Application

Regular fluoride use is the next best thing to brushing. You are probably already using fluoride toothpaste, but evidence shows that additional application with a dental fluoride treatment can further significantly reduce the risk of tooth decay. This is available in different forms:

- **Fluoride paste:** recommended for all children over the age of 3, this paste is simply painted onto teeth at least twice a year (and up to 4 times a year for those children at higher risk e.g. existing fillings/decay, or fixed braces)
- **Fluoride Daily Rinse:** available on prescription, this is recommended for children over the age of 8 who are at higher risk e.g. existing fillings/decay, or fixed braces.
- **Higher Fluoride Toothpaste:** available on prescription, this is recommended for children over the age of 10 and adults who have a higher risk of recurrent decay.

Fissure Sealants

Fissures are grooves usually found in the chewing surface of back teeth. They are difficult to keep clean especially when deep and so are more at risk of decay. They can be sealed with a plastic coating to help protect them. Sealants are recommended for all children over the age of 7 once the teeth have fully erupted. They are painted over a cleaned, prepared tooth surface similar to the fluoride paste and are specifically for back teeth.