Self-care Information

Tooth Decay

Tips on how you can avoid tooth decay.

"Supporting you to look after you and your family"

How to prevent tooth decay:

- **Visit your dentist regularly even if you do not have any problems.**

- **Brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride tooth-paste.**

- **Reduce the frequency that you and your family have sugary foods and drinks.**

Tooth decay can occur when acid is produced from plaque, which builds up on your teeth.

Symptoms include: toothache, tooth sensitivity, and bad breath.

Tooth decay may not cause any symptoms at first, but if it gets worse it can lead to problems such as a hole forming in the tooth.

If you have a hole in your tooth you may have:

- Toothache.

- Sharp pain in your tooth when eating or drinking hot, cold or sweet things.

- White, brown or black spots on your tooth.

Sometimes the tooth or gum can become infected, leading to a painful build up of pus.
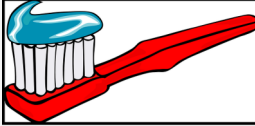
See your dentist if:

- You have problems with your teeth such as toothache or a sharp pain in your tooth when eating or drinking.

- Your gums are painful, swollen or bleed when you brush your teeth.

Your GP won't prescribe medication for a dental infection, please see your dentist if you think you have an infection in your teeth or gums.

⚠️

It is important to have regular check ups at your dentist even if you do not have any problems. See a dentist if you have not had a check up for 2 years (or 1 year if you are under 18)

You could try

- ✓ Visiting your dentist regularly so early tooth decay can be treated as soon as possible (your dentist can advise you about how often you need to go).

- ✓ Brushing your teeth with a fluoride toothpaste twice a day. Spit after brushing, do not rinse

- ✓ Cleaning in between your teeth at least every day using floss or an interdental brush.

- ✓ Seeing your dentist or GP if you have a dry mouth most of the time. This could be caused by certain medicines, treatment or medical conditions.

Try not to

- X Try not to eat too much sugary food and drink, particularly between meals or within an hour of going to bed.

- X Try not to smoke. Tobacco can reduce saliva production, which helps to prevent decay.
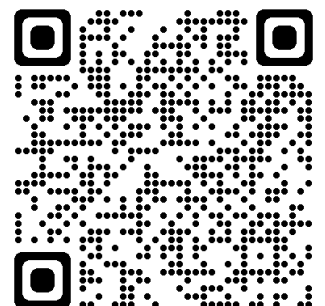
Find a dentist:

www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist

How to access a dentist in an emergency, or out of hours:

www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/how-can-i-access-an-nhs-dentist-in-an-emergency-or-out-of-hours

Here are some useful links to further information

NHS Website	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tooth-decay/
	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/babys-development/teething/looking-after-your-babys-teeth/
Patient Website	https://patient.info/oral-dental-care/toothache/tooth-decay
Or visit your local pharmacy for advice	