

Your guide to looking good in the dental maze



Pick and mix this Spring

Now is the best time of the year to get your teeth fixed, with prices in the private sector at all time lows and NHS funding high at the start of its financial year. Tom Rowland on how to play the system.



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MEDIA PLANET

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PURCHASES OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES UNITED KINGDOM	GRAMS PER PERSON PER WEEK	
	1974	2005/06
Total vegetables	2,578	1,998
Fresh potatoes	1,318	587
Other fresh vegetables	769	802
Processed potatoes	119	255
Other processed vegetables	372	354
Total fruit	731	1,292
Total fresh fruit	515	856
Oranges and other citrus fruits	136	151
Apples and pears	229	226
Stone fruit	16	78
Soft fruit	25	108
Bananas	84	225
Other fresh fruit	25	68
Fruit juices (ml)	34	350
Other fruit products ⁵	182	87

Source: Social Trends 2008/ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

▲ Table 2

hawk now. "Patients are confused by the complexity of the current charging regime, with the result that many find themselves paying for private treatment when they had thought they were being treated under the NHS", says the Citizens Advice Bureau.

It is vital to get the dentist to spell out exactly what can be done on the NHS in advance of any work starting and then to quote accurately for the work to be done privately.

If you do not like the figure he or she comes up with, then keep on shopping around.

Dental implants

and many of the cosmetic procedures are not funded on the NHS but many local dentists with a NHS sign on the door are set up to do the work.

For most of us the alternatives are to go to one of the new cut-price specialists in Central London - or to go abroad. Both options offer complex treatments at a fraction of the sky-high prices traditionally charged in the UK. Cosmetic dentistry in particular has come down in price in the last few years and is now much more affordable.

At least there are more dentists available to do the work now. Until recently, the UK was regarded as

under-supplied with dentists, compared to many Western nations.

This is now being addressed in substantial part by an increase in the immigration of overseas dentists, particularly from former eastern European countries (Table 1).

Recent research carried out on behalf of Denplan showed that about a quarter of the adult population - or about 11.5 million people - had had private dental care, and that lack of NHS access was the primary reason. But we could still be doing far more to help ourselves.

Between 1994 and 2006 the proportion of men classified as obese in England increased from 14 per cent to 24 per cent, while the proportion for obese women rose from 17 per cent to 24 per cent.

Only 14 per cent of men and 27 per cent of women in England consumed the recommended five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day, while eight per cent of men and six per cent of women consumed none (Table 2).

Consumption of vegetables has hardly increased at all over the past 35 years, if potatoes are excluded, although fruit consumption has gone up. We do not believe "an apple a day keeps the dentist at bay" it seems. Apple and pear consumption has not changed.

Fruit juices in comparison are up by a massive 10-fold increase and grapes and other soft fruit by four times.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE

1. Check your local NHS options via www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
2. Get some quotes
3. Shop around
4. Check out the cut-price private cosmetic dentists

It is the best of times and the worst of times to go to the dentist. The worst because last year the government lumbered them with a funding system that has been pretty much universally condemned.

The best because one of the consequences was to free patients. If you are prepared to shop around there are some very good deals on offer in both public and private sectors.

NHS dentistry has been transformed. Under the old contract patients registered with a dentist, who was paid by the NHS on piece-rates for the work done. This created a "drill-and-fill" mentality.

The new contract gave primary care trusts responsibility for NHS dentistry. Patients no longer need to register: they can approach any practice offering NHS dentistry and ask for an appointment.

If you live in London or the South East the reality is that you have never had more choice - so long as you are prepared to travel and pay the going rate for those pieces of work that you cannot get done for free.

Use the dental services finder on the NHS Direct web site as a first step. You can search on postcode for a dentist

and see which ones are offering some free treatment. All now also do paid for work.

A recent survey carried out by the Citizen's Advice Bureau estimated some 4.7 million people in Britain have opted for private dental care due to lack of NHS access.

Official statistics concede that 50,000 fewer patients were treated on the NHS in 2006-7 compared to the previous year.

The April watershed is important because the new contract pays dentists on the basis of "units of dental activity" (UDAs) and the coffers are replenished each year in April.

Go now and you are much less likely to have the dentist tell you apologetically that at the moment they do not have the NHS funding for the procedure you require. Go next January and they are more likely to have run out of NHS funding and only offer expensive private alternatives.

But you really have to watch like a

NHS general, dental and ophthalmic practitioners United Kingdom				Thousands
	2000	2003	2006	
GPs	35.2	37.2	40.2	
Dental practitioners	21.9	23.1	25.3	
Ophthalmic practitioners	10.1	10.5	10.9	

Source: Social Trends 2008.

▲ Table 1

DENTISTRY OF THE FUTURE, THE FUTURE OF IMPLANTOLOGY



SPEND A WEEK HOLIDAY IN HUNGARY AND RETURN WITH NEW SMILE!

STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY WITH 10 YEARS GUARANTEE

DENTAL IMPLANTATION AND IMPLANT POSITIONING

COSMETIC DENTISTRY

OWN LABORATORY AND TECHNICIANS

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- AND WE WILL TAKE CARE OF THE REST.



Previous years' Miss Universe Hungary too were prepared in a dental sense for international contests in our clinics.



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FULL PAGE
AD

The sweet smile of success

Sky high charges for cosmetic dentistry in London and the South East are under attack from a new generation of ultra-glamorous dentists offering super-rich looks at affordable prices.

Until recently if you wanted to get your teeth fixed for cosmetic reasons then the only option was to hand over a substantial fortune to a specialist cosmetic surgeon – but no longer.

If sporting bad teeth has traditionally been as British as a liking for a good night out and a soft spot for comedian Ken Dodd and his protruding incisors, in the last few years there has been a revolution in attitudes.

It is the young who are leading the way. According to a recent survey, people in the 25-34 age group are the most likely to have had teeth whitening; those aged 35-44 tend to opt for white fillings, while makeover shows are a popular vehicle to gauge cosmetic treatments, with almost half of

women (49 per cent) occasionally tuning in.

The prices charged for cosmetic dentistry in London have tumbled, partly because changes in the technology of tooth whitening have brought the treatments within the reach of many more.

Tooth whitening and ceramic veneers are no longer the preserve of the super-rich.

But you need to find somebody competent to do the work. Whitening is even offered in tanning salons now; it would be tragic to come out with lily-white skin and brown teeth.

Teeth are part of one's head after all, and there are obvious advantages in going to a proper dentist, not the

least being that they will fix structural problems as well.

"Function first, aesthetics after," a dentist firmly told me. Currently any dentist can offer cosmetic dentistry regardless of training or experience beyond the basic dental degree.

There are no specialist qualifications and no specialist register. Techniques constantly progress and the public are becoming increasingly dentally educated and discerning so you want somebody who is staying up-to-date.

The British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry(BACD) a trade association for dentists who specialise in treatments, lists 52 members in a variety of central London and suburban practices around the capital. (The list is on its web site at www.bacd.com.)

At least you have some guarantee that they are interested in trends and developments in the subject. To get

onto the list a dentist has to notch up 75 hours of career development and attend society meetings, although the organisation is slowly trying to bring in a more rigorous qualification regime based on examinations.

To date it has three members in London who have become fully accredited after exams.

Tooth whitening

No longer the preserve of celebrities and the super-rich, the market in teeth-lightening products has exploded in popularity in recent years, ranging from home kits to in-surgery procedures.

There are two main methods of bleaching - one performed by dentist or technician and one done at home. A dentist or technician applies a high concentration of oxidising agent for a short period of time, which produces quick results. To reduce the risk

of chemical burns to the soft tissues, most use a light-cured protective layer that is painted on the gums.

One of the most popular systems works by applying a whitening gel to the teeth, which is activated by a safe, 'wavelength-matched' blue light. The effects claim to be almost instantaneous, and lighten teeth by up to eight shades.

At-home whitening involves purchasing a thin mouth guard or strip that holds a relatively low concentration of oxidising agent next to the teeth for several hours.

You need to do both. If you do not carry on at home, there is no point in having the in-office procedures. It is a bit like getting your hair cut just once and never again. Once a month

SWISS MAGIC

Switzerland's next great export is going to be gleaming white teeth swathed in five-star hospitality but selling for low Continental prices.

That is the promise made by the stylish Abivardi sisters, Haleh, 38, and Golnar, 35, both dentists who have just opened the doors of Swiss Smile positioned on Brook Street, off New Bond Street in London W1.

The idea is to combine Swiss quality, fair prices, smart interiors and dental excellence and to offer it for 365 days a year.

London dentistry is shockingly expensive says Haleh and she and her sister are determined to offer a high quality alternative at an affordable price.

They are offering tooth whitening in surgery for half price at £195 until 30 April.

New treatment for sensitive teeth

Hypersensitive dentine is a common chronic condition which affects a high proportion of the adult population.

Tooth whitening treatments, fizzy drinks, fruit juices, wine and incorrect or aggressive brushing can all contribute to the problem of sensitive teeth, a problem that now plagues up to an estimated 40 per cent of adults.

The condition is triggered by exposure of the dentinal tubules at the base of your teeth.

A new treatment works by sealing these dentinal tubules and blocking painful sensations. The makers claim

it is quick acting and needs one 10 minute application to provide up to a month's protection.

To accurately deliver the active ingredient, it uses a double-tray system and foam strips impregnated with potassium oxalate, which has been proven by several clinical studies to be the most effective formula for treating dental hypersensitivity.

The application of Savodent makes

it the easiest to use product for treating sensitivity compared to tooth-pastes and paint-on treatments, while achieving the best results.

It can be bought as either a '1 month kit', which contains 1 double tray for upper and lower teeth with 1-application of Savodent Sensitive Teeth Treatment, or a '3 month kit' which also contains a double-tray but with a 3-application supply of Savodent Sensitive Teeth Treatment.

savodent

for 40 minutes should be enough for most people, say the experts.

Veneers

A dental veneer is a thin layer placed over a tooth surface, either to improve the aesthetics of a tooth or protect a damaged surface. There are two types of material used, composite and porcelain.

But patients who receive veneers should understand that they may only last 10-15 years and then may have to be replaced.

The big advantage of using a veneer to restore a tooth is that it can be made to look dazzling without much preparation.

The artistry is in making it look natural by matching the shade of an individual veneer to the remaining teeth. If the surface is not properly prepared and the tooth too thick then you can end up with white slabs behind bulging lips and looking like a chipmunk.

Why we are going for cosmetic dental treatments?

What once cost several thousand can now be obtained for a few hundred, although there is still some way to go. The findings of another recent survey showed that almost 60 per cent of Britons feel down in the mouth about their smile, and that flashing a dazzling set of teeth would help boost their confidence.

Dentists recommend brushing teeth for two minutes twice a day with an electric tooth brush, three minutes with an ordinary one, to ward off plaque-causing bacteria. However, 88 per cent of men admitted to not meeting this target.

So how can you achieve a superstar beam - without having to fork out £2,500 per tooth on surgical treatments, as Victoria Beckham was rumoured to have done last year?

Cure yourself

There is quite a lot you can do for yourself, says Dr Surinder Hundle, the official dentist on Channel 4's makeover show, "10 Years Younger".

“Tooth whitening and ceramic veneers are no longer the preserve of the super-rich. The prices charged for cosmetic dentistry in London have tumbled.”

Diet and lifestyle

"Cut back on sugary snacks between meals to prevent tooth decay, and reduce your caffeine intake to stop those tell-tale signs of discolouration setting in. It is also important to chew sugar-free gum after eating to stimulate saliva because it protects teeth and flushes away food," says Dr Hundle.

Another tip for perfecting a megawatt smile is to follow a tooth-friendly, "white teeth diet."

This involves swapping red wine for white, black coffee for the white variety and finishing a meal with milk to neutralise acid in your mouth.

Oral hygiene

Dr. Oliver Harman, one of the three accredited members of the BACD says: "Brushing teeth with fluoride-based toothpaste is vital to keep gum disease and tooth decay at bay. We advise combining this routine with using a mouthwash and regular dental check-ups." However effective these techniques may be, those in pursuit of the perfect smile should remember that non-surgical treatments can only go so far in enhancing what nature has blessed us with.

HIGH STREET WHITENING

Simon Gallier of Smile Store has opened cosmetic dentistry outlets in Superdrug shops.

"The idea started as tooth cleaning. My brother was a smoker and he just wanted to get his teeth cleaned, without going through the procedure of seeing a dentist" he explains.

The aim is to target the 50 per cent who never see a dentist. By going into a Superdrug the service is more approach.

The techniques they use slow the ageing process, make your teeth look 10 years younger, he explains.

Smile Store electronically take the colour of the teeth, a claimed unique feature.

"I guarantee you will have brighter teeth at the end, I will not guarantee the end shade but they will be whiter," says Dr Gallier.

Whitening costs. In store, £350 including electronic monitoring, trays and home gel to carry on at home.



▲ Cosmetic specialists: Haleh and Golnar Abivardi

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Open wide for the £140 Satnav toothbrush

You might think that you know your way around your own mouth but the latest electric toothbrush is there to prove you wrong. Here is our guide to the latest in high-tech toothbrushes guaranteed to massage both your gums and wallet.

As you clean Oral B's Triumph Smart-Guide toothbrush transmits its precise location to the electronics in the base station. It works on the same principle as Bluetooth headsets for mobile phones and the brush can be set to different modes ranging from sensi-

tive teeth to polishing, via gum massage.

Sensors detect the level of pressure you are putting onto the cleaning head and a warning light lets you know if you are pushing too hard.

The four speed brush was tipped as

the top buy by the Consumers' Association magazine "Which?" in its latest survey of electric toothbrushes where it clocked up an 82 per cent score.

Runner up with 76 per cent was the £100 Sonicare Elite e9500 from Philips. This brush has two speeds. It also has a timer to prompt you to brush for the recommended time.

"It is very simple to use and comfortable to hold and the brush heads are easy to change," said Which?

The Sonicare was marked down to 76 per cent by Which? because the rechargeable battery only lasted 57 minutes, but that still gives roughly two weeks use between charges, and battery life hardly a huge issue with rechargeable equipment of this kind.

Philips new top of the range offering is the Sonicare FlexCare, also £140. It is rather easier to use in different modes than Oral B's Triumph Smart Guide and comes with a UV Sanitiser rather than the Bluetooth guide.

Which? recommends its members keep clear of the Tesco Daily Care 2-Way Action, which scored lowest in the test. The Colgate Actibrush did little better and the magazine says it, "gave teeth only an average clean, has poor battery life and is not very comfortable."

Its other "Don't buy" recommendation is the Tesco extra care Vibra-Tech "one of the least comfortable brushes to hold."

Electric toothbrushes are becoming increasingly popular and with good reason. They might not be intrinsically more efficient than manual brushes but the timers and pressure gauges on good quality modern ones help keep you cleaning your teeth properly.

Children aged six or seven who brush their teeth on their own will not have the coordination problems that can arise when using a manual toothbrush and they enjoy the process more.

While prices for electric toothbrushes can get very high, you do not have to spend a fortune on one. Prices start from just £3.

The Oral B Vitally sensitive model is £22 and again is even lighter than any of the more expensive models. It has a good number of rotations

Electric toothbrushes are best – official

Barry Cockcroft, Government Chief Dental Officer said,

"Consider switching to an electric toothbrush as these have been shown to clean the teeth more effectively than manual toothbrushes."

"To protect your teeth from tooth decay and gum disease, it's vital to brush your teeth with a fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day. Use a fluoride mouthwash and visit your dentist as frequently as they advise."

"To prevent tooth decay, cut back on sugary snacks between meals. Sugar is used by bacteria in the mouth to produce acid that dissolves tooth enamel forming a hole."

"After meals, chewing sugar-free gum can help to protect teeth by stimulating the production of saliva which neutralises enamel-dissolving acids produced by sugar in our diet."

"To ensure that teeth remain as white as possible, my best advice is not to smoke. Smoking not only stains teeth but also damages your gums as well. If you drink tea, coffee and red wine, it's especially important to brush your teeth regularly in order to prevent stains building up on your teeth."

per minute for its price and is very easy to use. It cleans teeth very well and for people on a tighter budget, it is an ideal buy. At just £10, the Oral Advance Power 900 is a great buy and well within most people's budget. It is also rechargeable and is very easy to use and has a rotating head. The replacement heads are just £4 making it an affordable and reliable alternative to some of the more expensive models.

There are many other electric toothbrushes which are under £10 but most are not fitted with a rechargeable battery. However at such a low price, they should not be disregarded because many of them still offer



▲ The Philips Sonicare FlexCare. £140 with UV sanitiser and three brushing modes.

“Check the efficiency of the brush, its frequency of rotation and of course, your budget”

excellent performance and as most of them are a lot lighter in weight than rechargeable toothbrushes, they are perfect for travel.

In this category, one of the best models is Pearl Drops' Pro-whitening toothbrush. This is just £5 but the efficiency is not totally compromised by the price. It is very easy to use, has good rotation frequencies and is lightweight, says the Which? report. The rotating head offers a good clean and the replacement heads are just £3.

There are many things to consider when you buy an electric toothbrush but the main aspects which you need to look at are its efficiency, frequency of rotation and of course your budget.

NOT SOLD

FULL PAGE
AD

Tourists with toothache

Having dental work abroad is becoming increasingly popular. Many countries offer excellent service at a fraction of the cost of the UK making it an appealing alternative, reports Tom Rowland.



▲ Emily Mayer lost several of her teeth from periodontal gum disease when she was in her 40's, and had many others were loose.

Thailand boasts some of the best dental clinics in Asia. Many people choose to take a holiday and have their dental work completed while they are enjoying the sunshine.

Hungary is in sharp contrast to most European countries in that it has a hugely competitive army of highly trained dental professionals fighting for a relatively small home market.

Competition has been stoked further by waves of foreign clients initially crossing the immediate borders from

Austria and Germany in search of a better deal. Now, with the recent entry of Hungary into the EU, the marketplace has expanded and competition has grown fiercer producing some of the best clinics Budapest has ever seen.

This reporter can testify to the skill, efficiency and kindness of the staff of the Grace Dental Clinic in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand. The modern, high tech facility sits on a quiet leafy street and offers some of the best dental care in Asia. The dentists are

very highly qualified, with many of them having studied internationally before returning to Thailand to work.

A dentist in London told me that I needed periodontal work to remove some pockets that had developed in my gums. The quote from London was in excess of £5,000. I got the work done superbly in Chaing Mai for under £1,000.

“Dr Jarunee trained in Germany and offers a holistic approach to periodontal care at highly competitive prices”

Every kind of treatment is available from simple check ups to cleaning, implants, cosmetic work, oral surgery and orthodontic work. Prices are very reasonable with a general check up costing the equivalent of about £3.50. Obviously the more treatment required, the higher the price will be, but whatever you require, you will be guaranteed a much lower price than in the UK. For example tooth extractions are just £10 while tooth whitening costs less than £200; cheaper than usually available at any dentist in the UK.



▲ Dr Jarunee Wattanakla

The clinic specialises in periodontal work with Dr Jarunee Wattanakla providing exceptional service at a very reasonable price. Dr Jarunee has been at Grace Clinic for five years but has been practicing in Chiang Mai for over 17 years. She trained abroad and prides herself on offering a holistic and humanised approach. She works together with the patient and other specialists in the clinic to offer the best service and results possible.

Others tell similar stories about the high quality of dental work on offer in Hungary.

Emily Mayer lost several of her teeth from periodontal gum disease when she was in her 40's, and had many others that were loose.

Her treatment with the Smile Savers clinic in Budapest included 18 implants, bone grafting and 28 crowns/bridge, she was quoted in the region of £60,000 in the UK but in Budapest the work cost £20,000, a saving of £40,000.

Smile Savers is now offering London consultations, so clients can meet one of the specialists and get a full quote prior to traveling to Budapest.

Prices

Many people assume that the quality of materials used in dentistry must be much lower or the staff less qualified but materials are usually identical and often superior to UK counterparts and the staff every bit as well trained.

Perhaps the biggest factor that influences prices in both locations is the number of highly qualified dentists competing in the same market. The end result is escalating quality and plummeting prices.

The two golden rules of dental tourism are: one check on the reputation and qualifications of your dentist before you start treatment. They should be able to supply testimonials from happy clients from the UK. Do not try to fit too much into a single trip and leave plenty of time for work to settle before leaving.

Contact details

Grace Dental Clinic:
www.gracedentalclinic.com
Smile Savers. UK office:
Tel. 0845 8386278

Smile Savers

A whiter shade of pale

For the majority of people the discolouration of teeth is an unavoidable part of getting older caused by factors including caffeine and red wine. But there is lots of help available to undo the damage.

The colour of our teeth is largely determined by our DNA just like our hair and eye colour. If your parents suffer from stained teeth, the chances are that you also will.

The process of having teeth whitened gives many people the confidence to smile with pride.

The tooth whitening business has experienced a boom in recent years.

Many people are choosing to have in-house cosmetic surgery to improve their smile, while others who do not have such a large budget are using home kits.

A bleaching agent is used in most cases to

chemically remove any discolouration, but this does mean that not everyone is able to enjoy a whiter smile. Certain conditions, such as gum disease, prevent people from having the cosmetic surgery and need to be treated before having any cosmetic surgery.

If you decide that you want your dentist to carry out the procedure, you will have to have a dental check-up to ensure your teeth and gums are healthy.

Your gums and lips will be covered to prevent them from being damaged or becoming overly sensitive after the procedure. The bleaching agent is applied to every tooth before being exposed to ultra-violet light. This is then repeated three times to make sure the desired effect is achieved. The entire process takes no longer than two hours.

If you are considering having your teeth whitened but are also looking to have dental restoration work, you should have the whitening completed first so that any crowns and veneers can be matched to your new tooth colour.

The results are very successful and while they will vary for individuals, there is no doubt that you will have a bright, white smile once it has been completed.

“Ultra violet light help shine things up”

Another option, and one which is particularly appealing to those on a tight budget, is a do-it-yourself bleaching kit. These kits have

similar results but take much longer to produce results. You will still need to visit your dentist, as a mould of your teeth will need to be made. You will be given this mould and the solution which you wear overnight for several nights until the desired effect is achieved. While the process does take longer, you actually have more control over the colour you want to achieve.

You need to make sure that you will not damage your teeth and gums and that the mould fits the shape of your mouth exactly. By trying to save money, you could harm your teeth forever. Whiten your teeth under the supervision of a dentist.

If you use a home kit, you may find that your teeth are sensitive for about 24 hours after each application, but this

is only a very temporary side-effect. The length of time it takes for your teeth to whiten depends on a number of different factors; however it is very important never to lose patience and give up before the solution has had time to work.

Whitening toothpaste and chewing gum do not contain the bleaching agents vital in the tooth whitening process. Whitening your teeth requires more than a deep clean; you actually need to change the colour. So they will work until you have your next cup of coffee or glass of red wine.

They can also contain coarse elements, which scrub the teeth while brushing and may remove a protective layer of enzymes, which could result in damage to your enamel or receding gums.

While you may be desperate to have whiter teeth, it is important that you take the correct steps to get them. You must always consult a dentist, regardless of whether you have cosmetic surgery at the dentist or whether you use a take-home kit. The bleaching agent can damage your teeth and gums forever if you do not take professional advice. Because if this, you should steer clear of over-the-counter remedies claiming that they offer a brighter smile at a fraction of the cost.

Smiling with confidence could change your everyday life dramatically. If you are self-conscious about your discoloured teeth, having them whitened could be the answer you are looking for.



TOOTH WHITENING BARGAINS IN LONDON THIS SPRING.

Swiss Smile

Zoom 2 Advanced Tooth whitening (in office) £195 until the end of April. Usual price £390.

First consultation, including two X-rays, full examination, explanation of treatment plan and quotation. Until end of April. £45.

Swiss Smile dental clinics 10 Brook Street, London W1.

Tel: 0845 094 4004

Smile Store

In-Surgery power whitening This system involves initial power whitening (using 25 per cent gel) followed by a continuation, at home, using custom-made trays (using 10 per cent gel).

The at-home continuation should be carried out weekly for three months.

The package includes all the materials and gels necessary in the price. £350

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Brighton 78 Western Road, Brighton. Tel: 01273 327 402

Milton Keynes Unit 4, Woolworth Development, Midsummer Arcade, Milton Keynes. Tel: 01908 673 271

Guildford – coming soon 101 High Street. Tel: 01483 535258

Smile Store

Fluoride - health food or compulsory medication?



Dentists say that in countries where water fluoridation is widespread, such as America, Australia and New Zealand, dental health is far superior to London's. Now the Government is encouraging local strategic health authorities who want to introduce schemes to fluoridate water supplies.

The statistics are crystal clear, even if the water supplies are not. Dental health is better in those parts of the country where the water is treated compared with those where it is not.

Now the Department of Health is making a concerted push to corral more areas into the fluoride fold, and London is high on its target list.

Authorities are expected to carry out a public opinion survey, set up focus groups and consider all letters and resolutions.

The Department of Health has drawn up a "model agreement" covering the main terms to be included in any arrangements between England's 28 strategic health authorities and the water companies.

They can go ahead with a scheme if they are "satisfied that the health arguments in favour of proceeding with the proposal outweigh all arguments against proceeding".

The government argues that there is clear evidence that fluoridated tap water offers significant benefits to dental health.

"Fluoridation is an effective and relatively easy way to help address health inequalities - giving children from poorer backgrounds a dental health boost that can last a lifetime, reducing tooth decay and thereby cutting down on the amount of dental

work they need in the future. We have a duty to help the areas with the worst record on tooth decay to discuss this issue and take the necessary steps to improve their dental health," said Alan Johnston, the Health Secretary.

Fluoride has been added to Birmingham's tap water for over forty years and children living there have half the instances of tooth decay than children living in non-fluoridated Manchester.

A review of water fluoridation by the University of York in 2000 found water fluoridation increased the number of children without tooth decay by 15 per cent.

Water fluoridation schemes already exist in the North East and West Midlands affecting 5.5 million UK citizens and a further half a million people live in areas in which fluoride occurs naturally in the water.

In the US 70 per cent of people use fluoridated water and it has been added to the supply of all major US cities. In Australia the figure is 67 per cent.

In the Republic of Ireland, where 70 per cent of water is fluoridated, the average number of decayed, missing and filled teeth per child is just 1.32 compared to 2.31 in Northern Ireland where fluoridation has not been implemented.

In a survey of 5 year olds' oral health conducted by the British Association for

decayed, missing and filled teeth per child for England is fluoridated (see table below).

Anti-fluoride campaigners say that the science is unproven and that fluoridation poses significant risks to health (see table below).

Critics also claim that fluoridation is "indiscriminate mass medication", and should not be forced on people against their will through their water supply.

Supporters say the biggest argument in favour of water fluoridation is that it works. Although a large group of people mistakenly believes its supplies are fluoridated, only a small part of England is covered by schemes, principally around Birmingham and eastern England.

The last major battle over fluoridation was in the North East in the early 1990s, when health authorities, backed by 70 per cent of the local population, had a scheme that would have covered one million people rejected by Northumbria Water, and the courts.

PRIMARY CARE TRUST	DECAYED, MISSING AND FILLED TEETH PER CHILD	FLUORIDATED
The worst areas		
Blackburn	3.21	No
Knowsley	3.20	No
Nottinghamshire City	3.10	No
Manchester	3.01	No
Middlesborough	2.84	No
Rochdale	2.68	No
Oldham	2.6	No
Westminster	2.58	No
Bradford	2.56	No
Newham	2.36	No
The best areas		
Havering (Essex)	0.61	Some natural
NE Essex	0.65	Some natural
W Essex	0.66	Some natural
Dudley	0.7	Yes
Bassetlaw	0.83	Yes
West Kent	0.84	No
Surrey	0.84	No
Suffolk	0.87	Some natural
East Sussex	0.88	No
Bedfordshire	0.9	Yes
Source: Department of Health		

▲ The best and worst areas for tooth decay



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Parched

A dry mouth is a side-effect of taking a variety of medicines and also increases with age but it can be treated.

It is not something the healthy care to dwell on, but on average adults secrete around three pints of saliva every day. The quantities decrease with age as the salivary glands produce less; thirst receptors in your brain become less responsive to the body's need for fluids.

This precious liquid lubricates the mouth and contains enzymes which help to break down food and assists in swallowing. It also acts as a cleanser, constantly washing around the mouth and teeth, helping to keep teeth clean and fight decay.

Dry mouth or 'xerostomia' is a condition which affects the flow of saliva, causing a dry sensation in the mouth.

Symptoms include saliva that seems thick and sticky making it difficult to speak or swallow. Some experience a

prickly or burning sensation in the mouth and become sensitive to certain foods.

Soreness can also develop in the mouth or split skin appear at the corners while bad breath may also follow. Saliva limits bacterial growth that can dissolve tooth enamel or lead to mouth infections.

“Blood tests and imaging scans can identify the cause”

Its shortage may increase plaque, cause tooth decay and gum disease.

Most dry mouth is nothing to do with ageing however, it is related to medications and there are over 400 prescribed

and over-the-counter medications which list dry mouth as a side-effect.

They include drugs used to treat depression and anxiety, antihistamines, high blood pressure medications, anti-diarrheals, muscle relaxants, drugs for

urinary incontinence and Parkinson's disease medications.

It is also triggered by certain conditions including the autoimmune disease Sjogren's syndrome, endocrine disorders, Alzheimer's disease, stroke, anxiety disorders and depression.

Those undergoing chemotherapy can be prone to dry mouth as the drugs may change the nature of saliva and the amount produced. Radiation treatments to the head and neck can also damage salivary glands causing a marked decrease in saliva production and diabetes sufferers are more prone to oral infection due to an overabundance of bacteria from less saliva.

Blood tests and imaging scans of the salivary glands can identify the cause and where it is possible, doctors may adjust the dosage of medication or switch to another brand which alleviates the symptom.

A drug may also be prescribed to stimulate saliva production.

There are a number of products designed to provide moisture and comfort, usually gels or sprays.

Some have extra ingredients which may help prevent tooth and gum problems.

There are also specially formulated products to help with your normal oral hygiene.



Anglian pharma

Sore spots

While ulcers in the mouth are not life threatening they can be very painful to the sufferer. Fortunately a lot can be done to minimise the discomfort.

Between one fifth and one third of the population in the UK suffers from a variety of mouth sores, which include mouth ulcers, brace sores and denture sores.

The lining of the mouth can be damaged by physical or chemical trauma or by infection. Acidic foods, the sharp edge of a toothbrush or crispy foods can all cause damage leading to a mouth ulcer.

About 20 per cent of the population also suffer from Recurrent Aphthous Ulcers (RAUs) which can occur as a response to stress, hormonal changes, allergy, nutritional deficiencies, drug therapy, altered immune response or systemic disease.

Without treatment healing usually starts after a week and is completed within 14 days, although there are reports of individual ulcers lasting much longer.

The traditional treatments available are essentially gels and gelatipastels

laced with local analgesics to reduce the pain, anti-inflammatory agents to reduce inflammation and sometimes an antiseptic to help fight infection. They can also contain alcohol.

Bonjela is a pain-relieving gel that contains the medicine Choline Salicylate. It can help relieve the tears of teething in infants, the sores caused by teenage braces and the stress of adult mouth ulcers and finally to ease you through the denture sores of later life.

Rinstead Pastels have been around for decades but they are an effective means of bringing relief, and they are reasonably palatable.

Alocclair works by creating a shield over and around the ulcer to help reduce irritation and soreness. By gently adhering to the insides of the mouth, the Aloe Vera extract it contains soothes mouth ulcers, minor lesions, chafing and irritation caused by braces and ill-fitting dentures and

prevents further damage to the sensitive tissues in our mouth.

The makers claim it avoids the stinging sensation associated with some other treatments, which in some cases can lead to further irritation. Unlike these treatments, Alocclair does not sting on application, and its soothing action promotes healing whilst providing fast acting and long lasting pain relief.

Alocclair contains no alcohol and is suitable for the whole family, including children.

“Many believe stress leads to ulcers although the exact cause is not known”

Why do Mouth Ulcers Occur?

Despite being quite a common ailment, the actual cause is unknown.

The most common reason that people think they get mouth ulcers is being stressed or run down. As with many ailments, it is far more likely to pop up when you are overdoing it and your immune system is low. Other reasons for mouth ulcers are cuts in the mouth caused by nicking the gum or cheek with your toothbrush or food. Ill-fitting or new braces and dentures can sometimes cause sores that are painful when they are rubbed against or certain foods are eaten.

Brace sores occur as a result of braces rubbing against your gums or lips. It is normal to develop brace sores, especially when you first start to wear braces. Brace sores can be painful, but it is possible to ease this pain and help heal sores caused as a result of braces.

CURE YOURSELF TIPS

Watch your diet. Plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables to supply essential vitamins.

Try to get plenty of rest.

Clean your teeth after meals and then use an antiseptic mouthwash to keep your mouth clean and to help prevent infection.

Do not smoke.

Avoid spicy food and food that causes mouth ulcers to sting.

Try to avoid stress.

Consult your doctor if mouth ulcers are still present after 14 days.

Top foods to avoid

Curry
Salt
Hot drinks



Dexcel Pharma

Liquid health in a bottle

Milk and dairy foods are a source of calcium which is necessary for the normal structure of bones and teeth.



help reduce the damage to teeth. Casein forms a thin film over the enamel on the tooth surface, and in doing so helps prevent bacterial attack on the tooth. Casein can also bring about an increase in the pH of plaque (make it less acidic) which means teeth are less likely to be damaged by acid in the mouth. In addition casein can form complexes with calcium and phosphorus which are known as casein phosphopeptide-calcium phosphate complexes (CPP-CP), which stabilise both the calcium and phosphate in

calcium, phosphorus and casein which are important for dental health.

The National Diet and Nutrition Survey showed that nearly 60 per

“Eating a matchbox-sized piece of cheese after a meal neutralises acids in the mouth and can help prevent dental erosion.”

How much calcium?

A 200ml glass of whole, semi-skimmed and skimmed milks contain 243mg, 247mg and 258mg of calcium respectively.

A 150g pot of whole-plain yogurt and low-fat plain yogurt contain 300mg and 243mg respectively.

A 30g piece of hard cheese, such as cheddar, contains 222mg of calcium.

Dairy products are good for teeth because teeth need calcium to grow and stay healthy. Milk, cheese and yogurt all contain lots of calcium.

Milk and dairy foods provide many other nutrients and active ingredients which help protect teeth and help keep them strong and healthy. They also contain the mineral phosphorus, which along with calcium is believed to help prevent demineralisation, the release of minerals from the tooth, and to promote remineralisation, the laying down of minerals into the tooth.

The milk protein casein can also

the tooth enamel and make it less susceptible to solubility.

Hard cheese has been shown to be beneficial for dental health and teeth. In particular, hard cheese chewed after meals and snacks helps to maintain healthy teeth. The chewing of cheese stimulates an increase in saliva production which washes away bacteria in the mouth that may harm the teeth and gums. Eating a matchbox-sized piece of cheese after a meal neutralises acids in the mouth, which can help prevent dental erosion. The cheese also contains

cent of 4-10 year olds had tooth erosion and almost a third of 4-6 year olds had evidence of tooth decay. By drinking milk and dairy, children and adults will benefit from the tooth friendly nutrients they contain. It has also been shown that foods such as chocolate milk are less likely to contribute to dental caries than sucrose alone or solid snack foods since they also provide calcium, phosphorus and casein.

Good oral health, which involves regular brushing with fluoride toothpaste, is also critical.

DAIRY AND DENTAL HEALTH

Promotional feature

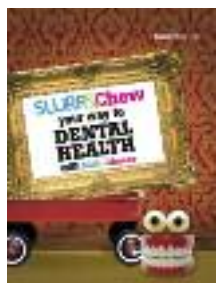
Milk and dairy products contain calcium and phosphorus, which are important for the growth, development and health of teeth. These elements are believed to help prevent demineralisation (release of minerals from the tooth) and promote remineralisation (laying down of minerals into the tooth).

Apart from water, milk is one of the few drinks that are safe to have between meals. The milk protein casein can also help reduce the damage to teeth. By forming a thin film over the enamel on the tooth surface, it helps prevent bacterial attack on the tooth.

Casein can also bring about an increase in the pH of plaque (make it less acidic), which means teeth are less likely to be damaged by acid in the mouth. Eating a matchbox-sized piece of cheese after a meal or as a snack can actually neutralise acids in the mouth, which can help prevent tooth decay. The chewing of cheese also stimulates an increase in saliva production, and this helps to wash away bacteria in the mouth that may harm the teeth and gums.

The Dairy Council provides evidence-based nutrition information on the role of dairy foods in a healthy balanced diet and lifestyle. To help people understand their bodies' nutritional needs, The Dairy Council provides a selection of free educational resources for all ages available for order from www.milk.co.uk.

For further information, or nutrition advice relating to dairy, please contact The Dairy Council at info@dairycouncil.org.uk or on 020 7395 4030.



NOT SOLD

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