



## Why does my mouth matter?

A healthy mouth helps with eating, drinking, speaking and socialising without pain and with dignity. This is important for everyone but even more so in dementia when routine functions can become more difficult.

A painful or infected mouth can impact on mood, behaviour and wellbeing. Loose teeth, poor diet, dehydration and mouth infections can all threaten general health.

Most mouth problems can be prevented by acting early while a person is physically well and able to make decisions about their own care. Together with the dentist, a plan can be made to treat current problems and help prevent future ones.



## Giving permission for treatment

- what you should know

- Decisions about treatment and care plans to prevent mouth problems should be agreed by the person with dementia, their carer and the dentist.
- Gaining consent for treatment is likely to be easier in the earlier stages of dementia.

### 5 Top Tips

1. Make sure the dental team are aware of the dementia diagnosis and any needs. Use the prompt card as an aid to discussion.
2. Ask the dentist to explain simply, what is required and why.
3. If there is any advice or information that you don't understand don't be shy to ask for a clearer explanation.
4. If gaining consent is a problem, family or carers may be approached so treatment can be provided in 'best interest'.
5. It is helpful for the family to take out a lasting power of attorney for health and welfare before capacity becomes an issue.

### Key contacts for further information:

Alzheimer's Society Factsheet 448 - Dental care and dementia:

<http://www.alzheimers.org.uk>

North West Office: 01925 572 239

### To find an NHS dentist near you:

Check NHS Choices online: [www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Dentists/LocationSearch/3](http://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Dentists/LocationSearch/3)

If you have an urgent dental problem, contact the Dental Helpline on 0161 476 9651 from 9am to 9.30pm every day, including weekends and Bank Holidays.

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This booklet is specially designed to give you key information, fast! Take five minutes to read each set of 5 top tips - you could save so much more in the long term.



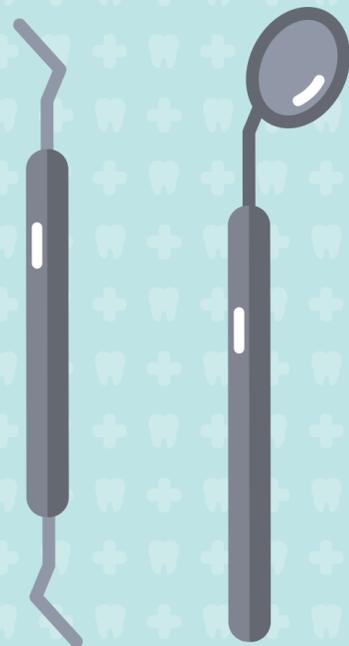
# Your mouth care matters!



# Visiting the Dentist

## - what you should know

- It is important to get your mouth checked for;
  - Tooth decay and gum disease,
  - Teeth, fillings or dentures that could cause problems later on,
  - Mouth cancers and other conditions.
- In early dementia, most types of routine dental care should be possible.
- Unless you are exempt from NHS charges, you will have to pay towards the cost of your treatment.
- Don't wait until you have a problem with your teeth or gums. See your dentist regularly.



## 5 Top Tips

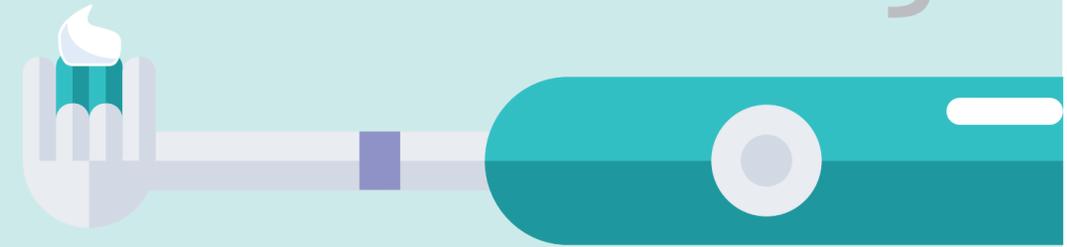
1. Continue to see your own dentist if you have one.
2. Show the Dental Prompt Card and 'This is me' booklet (if you have them) to the dental team when you visit. Don't worry if you forget the card, but tell the dentist that you have dementia.
3. Let the dental practice know if you are unwell, or having a 'bad day', and need to postpone your appointment.
4. Let the dentist know about any problems you have with your teeth and gums.
5. Ask the dentist for advice about how you can keep teeth and gums healthy and extra fluoride therapies which can be prescribed for you.

## Daily Mouth Care

### - what you should know

- Sugars in foods and drinks cause tooth decay. The more often they are consumed, the greater the risk.
- Limiting sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes will help reduce this risk. Some foods have 'hidden sugars', check the label.
- Brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste removes food and bacteria (plaque) from teeth. It makes the mouth feel cleaner and reduces the risk of tooth decay and gum disease.
- When you brush your teeth just spit out excess toothpaste. Don't rinse it out with water.
- All forms of tobacco can increase the risk of mouth cancer and seriously damage health.
- Medicines for dementia can cause side effects such as a dry mouth.

## Dementia Friendly Dentistry



## Top Tips for daily mouth care

1. Try to limit sugar-containing foods and drinks to main meals and have non-sugar snacks in-between (don't sacrifice calories).
2. Brush teeth and gums twice daily with fluoride toothpaste (at least 1350ppm) and always last thing at night. Don't rinse after brushing, just spit out the excess toothpaste. Your dentist can prescribe a special higher level fluoride toothpaste for you, just ask.
3. Try using a powered toothbrush if this helps.
4. You may need help with your toothbrushing and the dentist can advise you and your carer about this.
5. Speak to the dentist and/or the doctor if you suspect medications are causing side-effects in the mouth. Ask for sugar free prescriptions.