

Alcohol and tooth decay

Alcohol is known to contribute to an increase in tooth decay. This is because the majority of alcoholic beverages contain high amounts of sugar and frequent consumption will de-mineralise and weaken tooth enamel. Regular alcohol use can result in serious tooth and gum problems.

Opioid (Heroin) and the effect on teeth

Heroin is known to cause oral health problems and, for chronic long term users, damage to teeth and gums. In surveys of injecting heroin drug users, up to 70 percent described problems such as teeth snapping off, teeth falling apart, gum disease and trauma.

Stimulant effect on teeth

Stimulants like ecstasy, amphetamines and cocaine can cause oral health problems. Teeth can become ground down and, in some cases, cracked from clenching and grinding.

How to ask for our help

1 Online:

www.nottinghamrecoverynetwork.com
info@nottinghamrecoverynetwork.com

Visitors to our website can either ask directly for support in confidence, and will also find links to a range of useful resources.

2 Face-to-face:

Nottingham Recovery Network Assessments:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday: 9.30am - 4.30pm
Wednesday: 9.30am - 5.30pm and
Saturday: 9.30am - 12.00pm

We are based at the Nottingham Wellbeing Hub,
73 Hounds Gate, Nottingham NG1 6BB.

3 On the phone:

0800 028 5598 or 0115 970 9590

 Nottingham Recovery Network  @NottmRecoveryNetwork

 @NottsRecovery



Advice aiming to help you improve your **oral hygiene effected by alcohol or drugs.**



Nottingham NHS Urgent Care Centre - walk in
Seaton House, London Road, Nottingham NG2 4LA

Tel: 0115 883 8500

The dental nurse is available from and will offer dental nurse triage and advice:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 8.30am to 5.45pm

Tuesday and Thursday: 8.30am to 6.45pm

Saturday and Bank Holidays: 8.00am to 12.45pm

*The NHS dental service is available on-site and can provide free advice on dental problems. Consultation with the dentist or any treatment will require you to pay a contribution as per the standard NHS dental charges. You may be exempt from these charges, for more information see the NHS website.

January 2019

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*To make an emergency dental appointment
call 0115 883 8500



Effect of substance abuse on oral health

For people who have a substance abuse problem, maintaining an adequate level of oral hygiene is often not adhered to. They may be overcome with the devastating effect of their addiction and forget to brush or floss for days on end. Additionally, if they experience pain associated with their mouth, they may ignore it and self-medicate the problem with alcohol or drugs which only worsens the problem.

People who take drugs or drink alcohol tend to use the substances in higher amounts in the evenings, before going to sleep. The increase in consumption of sugary drinks including alcohol, snack food that includes high sugar levels and refined carbohydrates at night is known to lead to a higher rate of decay and plaque. This is particularly true if a person does not brush and floss their teeth before going to sleep.

For people who vomit when they are intoxicated or under the influence, they expose their teeth to corrosive chemicals that can increase the problems of decay and enamel wear on their teeth.

Maintain good oral hygiene

- Brush your teeth last thing at night before bed and at least one other time each day, normally taking around two minutes.
- Brush your gum line and each tooth.
- Consider a small-headed, medium-texture toothbrush (replaced frequently).
- Interdental cleaning before brushing can improve your plaque (use dental floss tape), interdental/single-tufted brushes or kit recommended by your dentist).
- Avoid rinsing your mouth with lots of water after brushing (it washes away the fluoride) just spit out the excess toothpaste.
- If you are using a fluoride mouth rinse, never use this just after brushing (you will simply be washing away the more concentrated fluoride from your toothpaste).
- Take advice from a dentist on the need for a fluoride varnish or high-concentration fluoride toothpaste. These are sometimes recommended for those at high risk of dental caries (often called cavities, are erosions of the surface of the tooth caused by the combined effects of bacteria, acids, plaque and tartar).



Other factors to consider

Reduce the total amount of any foods or drinks with 'added sugar' you consume and leave a couple of hours or more between any such products. This time gives saliva time to reduce some of the negative effects caused by the sugar. 'Added sugars' are sugars, syrups or honey added to foods and drinks by the manufacturer, cook or consumer.

If you have evidence of problems with tooth wear you need dental advice. You should avoid frequent intake of acidic foods or drinks, keep acidic drinks to meal times and limit fruit drinks to no more than one a day.

You should not brush immediately after eating or drinking acidic food or drinks as the acid makes the tooth temporarily vulnerable to added damage. You should also not brush immediately after vomiting.

If you are taking methadone solution you could consider:

- Using a straw to reduce direct contact of methadone solution with your teeth/gums
- Using water to wash down any remaining solution in your mouth
- Brushing your teeth after taking your methadone (however, the brushing should normally be delayed for at least half an hour or so if you have recently consumed any acidic foods or drinks).

