

Caring for your mouth when in hospital

In association with:

**How should I care for my mouth whilst in hospital?**

It is important to brush your teeth twice a day using a fluoride toothpaste. This removes plaque and food debris and ensures a clean mouth. Ideally, good oral health is helped by cleaning in-between the teeth with floss or interdental brushes. However, we understand that you might not be able to do this when you are in hospital. Some patients may be advised to use a mouthwash as well.

**Will you help me if I am unable to care for my own mouth?**

If you are unable to care for your own oral health, we can help you, so please let us know if you would like us to help.

**Please remember that we are here to help you. If you have any questions or need further information, please let us know.**

If we discover that you have a dental problem, we may advise you to visit your dentist when you are discharged from hospital.

If you cannot contact your dentist, or if you do not have one, you can get help using NHS 111 or at [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk)

Select ‘Check my dental symptoms or find a dentist’

You can search for a dentist at:  
https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist

If you are not able to register with a dentist, or to find out more information about community dental care, contact NHS England on: 0300 311 2233.



**What if I haven’t brought my toothbrush or toothpaste with me?**

If you can, please ask a friend or relative to bring these in for you. If this is not possible, we can provide you with a toothbrush and toothpaste. Please ask us as soon as you can. These items can also be purchased from the Lloyds pharmacy on level 3 or WHSmith at the Main Entrance.

**I wear dentures. What will happen to them?**

You can continue to wear your dentures as normal while you are with us, but you should leave your dentures out at night-time.

When you are not wearing your dentures, please store them safely in a suitable container. We can provide you with a lidded pot. Do not wrap them in tissues or bed linen as they may then get lost.

It is important that they are cleaned daily.   
We can help you to clean your dentures if necessary.

**My mouth feels dry. Why is this?**

A dry mouth has many causes including:

* Dehydration
* Being “nil by mouth”
* Using an oxygen mask
* Breathing through your mouth
* Taking certain medicines
* Chemotherapy

If your mouth feels dry please tell us. Try to ensure you are drinking lots of fluids (unless you have been advised not to). We can apply gels and creams to your mouth and lips to make them feel more comfortable.

**My mouth is painful, what should I do?**

Please let us know as soon as possible if your mouth is sore or uncomfortable.   
We will investigate this and provide advice or arrange for any help that you might need.

**Why is good oral health important?**

Oral health is important for overall wellbeing and can have a significant impact on your general health. Having a healthy and comfortable mouth is important for everyone.

Poor oral health and poor oral hygiene have been linked with worse outcomes for many health conditions. A decline in oral health can lead to infection and a longer hospital stay.

It is therefore important to maintain good oral health during your time with us.

**How will you help me maintain my oral health while in hospital?**

If you are with us for more than 24 hours, we will perform a gentle and thorough assessment of your mouth. This enables us to make an oral care plan that meets your needs. We carry this assessment using a light to look carefully around your mouth.