

Dental treatment

- Help is at hand - there are places called Dental Access Centres. These are specifically designed as "drop-ins" and will usually provide immediate treatment to relieve pain. You can find your nearest one in your local telephone directory or by calling the NHS Direct on 0845 46 47.
- For further information on dental matters, you can call The National Dental Helpline 0845 063 1188 for free, confidential advice.

Other health issues

- For health issues please talk to your pharmacist
- Call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47



National Dental Helpline 0845 063 1188
www.dentalhealth.org.uk

Produced in Association with the British Dental Health Foundation (BDHF)

For further advice, our fully trained staff are on hand in store to help. Alternatively, contact our customer service helpline on 08450 708090 (local rate, calls may be recorded for training purposes) between the hours of 8am and 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am and 4pm on Saturday. ROI customers should call customer services on 1 890 708091

Products may be available in selected larger stores only and may be subject to stock availability.

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This leaflet is available in large print and audio formats too. Just call Alternative Formats free on 0808 1562229 or minicom 0808 1562228

For advice and information visit
www.boots.com

Your guide to oral health

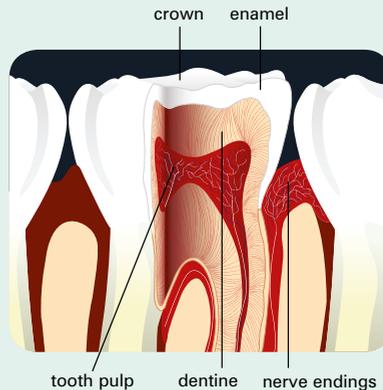
Specialist advice for drug users



Facts about your teeth

Did you know that your tooth enamel is the hardest thing in your body?

This is just as well because underneath the enamel lie the more sensitive parts of the tooth which need to be protected. First is the dentine, which makes up the majority of the tooth and protects the tooth pulp below. The pulp contains the nerve endings and blood supply, which keeps the tooth alive and healthy.



It is important to keep the teeth and gums healthy.

This will not only help you to keep your teeth for life, but can lessen the pain and discomfort you could experience.



Dental side effects of drug abuse

Amphetamine (speed), ecstasy (E) and cocaine users sometimes feel like they don't have time for a proper meal. However "snack-attacks" on high-sugar foods can quickly wear away the tooth enamel because the sugar turns to acid. You won't feel it but the acid from sugar is what causes most tooth decay.

Methadone and other **opiates** can cause dryness of the mouth which can increase the risk of dental decay.

Heroin, dihydrocodeine and buprenorphine can act as pain suppressors, disguising the presence of tooth decay. Often emergency treatment is required if it has gone unnoticed.

Top tips for good oral health

Methadone is often delivered in syrup and is sweet and sticky. The sugars in methadone can turn to the acid which rots teeth. Try to drink the liquid through a straw to stop it hitting your teeth. You can also ask your doctor for a sugar-free methadone. It will provide the same clinical effect but may help save your teeth.

You may be experiencing a dry mouth, which feels like you aren't producing enough saliva and can be very uncomfortable. This is common, but you can talk to your pharmacist or NHS Dental Access Centre about this.

Chewing sugar free gum after taking methadone will help stimulate saliva and reduce acid attack.

Try to brush your teeth twice a day, using a fluoride toothpaste containing at least 1350 to 1500 parts per million of fluoride. By using this amount of fluoride you are protecting the enamel from decay and erosion. Brush your teeth for at least 2 minutes. Not only is this good for your dental care, but it also gives you fresher breath and can often make you feel better and more able to get on with life. Don't forget to clean in between your teeth with dental floss as well.

DON'T EVER be tempted to pull out your own teeth, no matter how loose they may seem. This can lead to serious infection and a lot of unnecessary pain. Instead talk to your pharmacist or drop-in to your local NHS Dental Access Centre who will be pleased to help you.

Mouth cancer kills one person in the UK every 5 hours.

Smoking tobacco, heroin or cannabis, is one of the major factors that can cause mouth cancer. Be vigilant with your oral hygiene. Run your tongue round your mouth and check in the mirror. If you notice any changes in your mouth, or have mouth ulcers that don't heal within 3 weeks, talk to your pharmacist or drop-in to your local NHS Dental Access Centre.

