

At Temple Street Dental Practice, prevention of dental disease is our priority and we try to educate and empower all of our patients to take control of their oral health in order that they can keep healthy teeth and gums for life.

There are several oral diseases that are affected by lifestyle and habits, medical conditions and environmental factors. Small changes can have enormous effect on the prognosis for your long-term oral health. Please read below about the various oral problems that we see. Please also see our other leaflets and videos available on our website www.templedental.co.uk.

In brief, we advise all our patients to:

- Brush your teeth twice daily for two to three minutes using a fluoride toothpaste
- Clean between all of your teeth daily using dental floss or interdental brushes
- Eat a balanced diet low in refined sugars. Avoid snacking on sugary foods between meals
- If you smoke- contact your GP for specialist smoking cessation advice
- Avoid acidic foods and beverages, which will erode away the surface of your teeth
- Keep alcohol consumption within recommended limits
- When playing contact sports, wear a custom-made mouthguard
- Visit your dentist regularly at the recall period recommended by your dentist

Dental decay (caries)

See our videos on "How to Brush" and "How to floss"

Tooth decay is one of the most common diseases throughout the world- but also one of the most easily preventable. It is caused by dental plaque, which constantly builds up on the teeth. When plaque is in contact with dietary sugars it produces acids, which dissolve the teeth and cause holes. These holes- cavities- can progress quickly and will eventually cause pain.

- Daily brushing and flossing will help remove most of the plaque from your teeth
- If you avoid sugary foods and snacks, any remaining plaque will not be able to produce enough acid to cause cavities
- Fluoride helps strengthen the teeth against acids and so using a fluoride toothpaste (and possibly fluoride mouthrinse) will further help prevent dental caries
- Visit your dentist regularly in order to identify cavities early before they become painful or deep

Gum disease (periodontitis)

See our Video and read our pdf leaflet on Gum Disease

Gum disease is extremely common and is often unrecognised because it rarely causes pain. It is caused by dental plaque and when allowed to progress it can lead to the teeth becoming loose and eventually falling out. Smokers are far more likely to suffer from gum disease, as are people with diseases such as Diabetes. A family history of gum disease could also indicate that you may be more likely to suffer with periodontitis

- Excellent brushing and flossing should help prevent progression of the disease in most cases
- Use a toothpaste containing "triclosan" and a mouthwash containing "chlorhexidine" (be aware that chlorhexidine may stain your teeth)
- Visit your dentist regularly in order to have your gums checked and to receive instruction in how to clean your teeth more effectively
- Take professional advice on smoking cessation
- If you are diabetic, maintain good control of your diabetes with appropriate medical treatment
- Ask your family if there is a history of gum problems with parents or siblings.

Dental erosion

Read our pdf leaflet on Dental Erosion

Erosion is dissolution of the tooth surface caused by acids, most usually from food, drinks or from the stomach (vomiting or regurgitation). Very many drinks are acidic; most obviously fruit juices and carbonated drinks but also fruit teas and white wine.

- Avoid carbonated drinks (eg colas)- even diet versions of these
- Avoid regularly having fruit juices or eating a lot of citrus fruit
- If you do have acidic food or drinks, avoid swishing the drinks around your mouth- it is better to drink them through a straw
- Avoid brushing your teeth immediately after having acidic drinks- the enamel will be at its weakest at this time
- Use a fluoride toothpaste and mouthwash to strengthen your teeth against acid
- Neutralise any dietary acids by rinsing with water; using sugar-free gum or by eating or drinking dairy products
- Seek treatment for any medical conditions that cause you to vomit or to regurgitate stomach acid
- Do not brush your teeth immediately after vomiting

Dental trauma

We see a lot of dental trauma at the practice. This is often sports-related or due to accident (notably bicycle accidents). The most common trauma we see to the front teeth is due to young people drinking from glass bottles in crowded bars – if they are bumped by the crowd the bottle will often damage the incisor teeth.

- Wear a custom-made sports mouthguard when playing contact sports
- Wear a helmet when cycling
- Avoid drinking directly from glass bottles

Oral cancer

Sadly this is a disease which has become much more common. All patients attending for dental examinations at Temple Street Dental Practice will be screened for oral cancer by careful checking of the oral soft tissues.

Oral cancer is strongly linked to smoking and to excessive alcohol consumption. Recent studies have found a significant oral cancer increase in young (20s and 30s) people who have been orally exposed to sexual transmission of the herpes virus.