



# Word of Mouth



## Your dental questions answered!

Avid readers of our newsletter will know that we try to place our focus on oral health matters because a healthy mouth equals a healthy body!

We are dedicating this edition to answering some of your dental health questions.

### **I have sensitive teeth. What can I do?**

Having sensitive teeth can mean anything from getting a mild twinge to experiencing severe discomfort that can continue for several hours. It can also be an early warning sign of more serious dental problems.

Try using a toothpaste specifically designed for sensitive teeth. Brush your teeth as normal using de-sensitising toothpaste and then rub a little paste onto the sensitive area when going to bed as it helps protect the surface.

Please note that these toothpastes can take anything from a few days to several weeks to take effect.

Try to avoid strongly acidic foods and drinks and wait at least an hour after eating before brushing as this could cause even more sensitivity. Grinding your teeth can also increase sensitivity and a mouth guard may be necessary.

If the pain continues, speak to us. We may be able to offer further care to reduce your symptoms. A number of things can cause sensitivity and we will be able to identify these and offer advice.

### **Why does my mouth feel dry?**

Dry mouth can be a symptom of many different problems and can happen as we get older. It can be very uncomfortable and can make eating certain foods difficult.

Quite often it is a side effect of prescription medication - especially heart, blood pressure and depression tablets.

If you are taking any regular medication from your doctor, it may be worth discussing these symptoms with them to

see if there is an alternative that does not have the same side effects. Also discuss this with your dentist, who may recommend one of the many products that are available over-the-counter to help to alleviate this problem.

### **Speak to us in person**

We encourage you to raise any concerns about your oral health during your routine examination and we urge you to let us know if you notice any changes in your mouth since your last visit.

## Fully committed to your care

It is with mixed emotions that Seaham Smiles bids farewell to NHS dentistry and embraces a new era of private dental care.

For years, we have been dedicated to serving our community under the NHS. However, as challenges with NHS funding persist, we have come to a crossroads.

After careful consideration, we have decided to transition away from NHS dentistry. Effective from 1st April, 2024, we will no longer provide NHS dental care.

We are confident that it will enable us to better fulfil our commitment to delivering



top-tier dentistry to our valued patients.

We are committed to enhancing our patients' experience by offering reduced appointment waiting times, extended appointments and a wider range of advanced treatments and services.

We have had an overwhelming response from those wishing to remain registered with us and now have fewer than 250 spaces left on our membership plans.

We are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead and are fully committed to ensuring your oral health and satisfaction remain our top priorities. Please get in touch for more information.

# Spotlight: What causes gums to bleed?

Gums bleed when they are irritated and inflamed. This is due to plaque (a soft film of bacteria) being left on the teeth that causes inflammation and if not addressed can develop into more serious gum disease and even tooth loss.

Over time, if plaque is not cleaned off through daily brushing and interdental cleaning, the plaque can turn into a hard deposit called tartar or calculus which will require professional removal by your dentist or hygienist.

Even if our gums bleed it is important they are still brushed to keep the mouth clean otherwise the bacteria build up in the mouth making gum inflammation worse.

**After a few days of thorough cleaning, the gums should stop bleeding. If this doesn't happen, please get in touch.**

A good daily oral care regime of brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste for a minimum two minutes each should prevent our gums from bleeding.



This regime can be further supported by using interdental brushes before toothbrushing to dislodge any bits of food stuck between our teeth that can then be easily brushed away with a manual or electric toothbrush.

We always recommend regular dental examinations to help diagnose and treat anything unusual in your mouth and to ensure you get the correct care and advice.

Please consider using a softer brush whilst the gums are inflamed until they become healthier. It is also important to

continue cleaning in between our teeth daily using interdental brushes or floss.

**IMPORTANT** - Smoking can cover up a gum problem as it restricts blood flow to the mouth. If you have recently given up smoking this could allow the gums to get a better circulation and therefore start to bleed. **If you are a smoker, please ensure you visit us regularly so that we can spot any issues early.**

## Why have my teeth become sensitive?

The part of the tooth we can see has a layer of enamel that protects the softer dentine underneath. If the dentine is exposed, our teeth can become sensitive. Here are some causes of sensitivity:

- **Brushing too hard** and brushing from side to side, can cause enamel to be worn away particularly where the teeth meet the gums. The freshly exposed dentine may then become sensitive.
- **Dental erosion:** this is loss of enamel caused by attacks from acidic food and drinks. If enamel is worn away, the dentine underneath is exposed which may lead to sensitivity.
- **Gums may naturally recede** and the roots of the teeth will become exposed and can be more sensitive. Root surfaces do not have

an enamel layer to protect them.

- **Gum disease:** a build-up of plaque or tartar can cause the gum to recede down the tooth and even destroy the bony support of the tooth. Pockets can form in the gums around the tooth, making the area difficult to keep clean and the problem worse.
- **Tooth grinding:** This can cause the enamel of the teeth to be worn away, making the teeth sensitive.
- **A cracked tooth or filling** can cause the nerve inside the tooth to become exposed.
- **Tooth whitening:** some patients have sensitivity for a short time during or after whitening.

**Please speak to us if you have any concerns.**

## Practice news

### Welcome aboard!

We are pleased to welcome Sophie to the Seaham Smiles team. Sophie has joined us as an apprentice dental nurse.

### Keep us updated

When you arrive for your dental appointment, we kindly ask that you provide us with your up-to-date contact details. We're striving to reduce paper and enhance communication via email. Please provide your email address during your next visit.

### Medical history

Before your dental appointment, please complete an updated medical history. We will send a link to your mobile to update your medical the day before your appointment.

### Fire drill training

We have carried out our bi-annual fire drill to ensure all staff are trained in case of a real fire.

## Seaham Smiles Dental Surgery

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### Opening hours

Monday	08.30 - 19:00
Tuesday	08.30 - 18.00
Wednesday	08.00 - 18.00
Thursday	08.00 - 20.00
Friday	08.00 - 16.00

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