

# Summary of dental hygiene advice for patients with head and neck cancer

Department of Restorative Dentistry

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Information for patients

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## Introduction

This leaflet lists some simple tips about how to look after your teeth or dentures during and after your cancer treatment. You should be registered with a general dentist and attend for regular dental check-ups. The restorative dental team can support you and provide advice during the course of your treatment.

## Sore and dry mouth

The following may help:

- Regular, frequent sips of water. Ice chips are also very soothing.
  - **Diffiam®** mouth wash used before meals (only available on prescription)
- or
- **Biotene®** oral balance mouthwash and saliva replacement gel (available over-the-counter).
  - **Gengigel®** mouthwash (available over-the-counter)

## Dental hygiene

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day, using a soft toothbrush to start with.
- A month after surgery, use mouth washes, such as Corsdoyl Daily®.
- Fluoride mouth rinses can help - such as Colgate FluoriGard® alcohol-free mouth rinse.
- Use these mouthwashes at least 30 minutes after brushing your teeth.
- Ask your dentist to check your dentures to ensure they fit well. If the dentures become ill-fitting or hurt during the course of your treatment, do not put them in and tell a member of the team looking after you.
- Keep your dentures out at night and leave in a tub of water. Avoid soaking your dentures with any bleach-based solutions as this can damage the denture surface.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## Gels and toothpastes

- **High concentration fluoride toothpaste**, such as Duraphat® 5000, helps in the replacement of fluoride that helps strengthen teeth and reduce the risk of decay. **This can be prescribed by your GP or dentist.**
- **GC Tooth Mousse®** helps to repair and slow down the process of tooth decay by replenishing tooth nutrients such as calcium and phosphate. **Patients allergic to dairy products should not use GC Tooth Mousse®.**

These gels and toothpastes can be used in addition to your normal brushing techniques:

1. Brush teeth as normal.
2. Apply fluoride gel or tooth mousse on to tooth surface and leave on for approximately three to five minutes.
3. Your dentist can make application mouth guards for the pastes.
4. Try to spit out rather than rinsing.
5. Avoid eating or drinking for 30 minutes.
6. Visit your dentist and dental hygienist at least twice a year.

## Advice about eating and drinking

- Avoid eating too many foods with high sugar and carbohydrate content.
- Be sure to check the sugar content of any fluid supplements you are taking. Ask your dietitian if you are unsure.
- Cut down the number of acidic or fizzy drinks you have.
- Avoid spicy and hard foods which can cause further irritation of your mouth.

## Further information

If you are concerned about any aspect of your dental care please contact a member of the Restorative Dentistry Team:

**Telephone: 0116 256 3525 or 0116 256 3526**

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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