

PREVENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Prevention is the most effective form of Dentistry. The most important thing we can do for our patients is to ensure they have a reasonable diet and are cleaning their teeth really well just once a day.

We have some great restorative materials in modern dentistry, but none of them comes close to the suitability and effectiveness of a healthy tooth. When a tooth is restored or crowned it must be considered much weaker than the original tooth and much more likely to suffer decay.

Within the mouth a restoration/filling must withstand extremes of temperature, alternating acidic/alkaline conditions as well as varying multi-directional forces. A tooth is an amazingly designed structure and built to withstand all of the above. The inner core is dentine, a soft elastic structure that will bend under stress while the outer core is enamel which is hard and impenetrable. Enamel is very brittle by itself but supported by dentine it is amazingly strong. The shape of each tooth is a highly complex design that is ideal for that tooth's position and function in the mouth. It is impossible to reproduce this level of design, in any type of restoration/filling, no matter how good the dentist or laboratory material used.

The best fit attainable by a dentist is reckoned to be four microns (4/1000th of a millimeter) but to bacteria this is a huge opportunity. Decay in a tooth is bacterial invasion of that tooth and this is our greatest fight defending the tooth from bacterial attack.

Bacteria need to lie undisturbed on the surface of the tooth, for 24 hours, before the colony has a structure that can attack the tooth. The bacteria also need the presence of refined carbohydrates to create acids that dissolve and demineralise the tooth. If there is no bacteria or no sugars present decay will not occur.

The mouth contains a whole range of bacteria yet only some of these will cause decay. Diet greatly effects the type of bacteria in the mouth. If someone has a diet rich in sugars, the proportion of decay forming bacteria increases greatly, and so whenever sugar is ingested damage will occur. Conversely, if a person rarely eats sugars, there will be small numbers of the damaging bacteria so even when sugars are taken very little damage is done.

At the worst extreme, if a patient's diet is high in sugars the numbers of bacteria become so high it is impossible to effectively brush the teeth and decay is visible in a matter of weeks. The best way to protect your teeth is to have a reasonable diet, with not too many sugars or fizzy drinks and to brush and floss your teeth at least once a day.

Teeth are so amazing, and our attempts to reproduce them are so crude in comparison; it is a crime to allow them to decay. Forgive me and my staff as we persuade, cajole and bully you into brushing and flossing effectively.

ADULT PREVENTATIVE PROGRAMME

This can be set up through our DENPLAN ESSENTIAL PROGRAMME* or booked independently. Patients are seen by me once a year and twice by our hygienist. These visits will be evenly spaced throughout the year so that patients are screened every four months.

I will carry out a full exam, checking the health of the gums, teeth, as well as screening the soft tissues for any problems. Any necessary radiographs will be taken and checked. I will discuss any issues including areas that need better cleaning. We then treat all teeth with Ozone, polish and finish off the treatment using a high fluoride paste or tooth mousse on all teeth to protect and prevent decay.

The appointments with our hygienist are more specific. She stains the teeth with a special dye to show any areas being missed when cleaning; the dye differentiates between bacteria present for less than 24 hours (harmless) and bacteria present for over 24 hrs that are causing damage.

All the teeth are scaled, especially the areas between the teeth to remove all areas of tartar and bacteria. Tartar removal is very important to keep the gums healthy; more teeth are lost due to gum disease than tooth decay. Long term gum disease also has close and well documented links to heart disease. Your heart wants you to have healthy gums!

Again, I ask patients to book these appointments evenly throughout the year, this means every four months your teeth are being screened and having the preventative fluoride treatment applied. Please don't double up seeing me then the hygienist on the same day, as this decreases the effectiveness of the treatment. We have scheduled in some late evening appointments to allow patients easier access.

Finally, we ask patients to use a high fluoride toothpaste on a regular basis. Most toothpastes contain fluoride; fluoride applied to the surface of a tooth allows the tooth to absorb it, strengthen the tooth and repair any early decay. If you rinse your teeth with water after brushing you wash away all the fluoride greatly decreasing the effectiveness of the toothpaste. It is best to first floss, then brush your teeth for three minutes, after brushing, rinse the foam around and in between your teeth for 20 seconds, then spit out the foam. Do not rinse with water.

This method coats all tooth surfaces in fluoride and saturates the saliva with fluoride. At night when sleeping, saliva production stops, so if this is done last thing at night your teeth will be bathed in healing fluoride while you sleep.

* 10% discount on future treatment and £15,000 in insurance coverage.