

# 3. MY TEETH AND GUMS

You need a dental check up every year.



Reviewed September 2023. Free to use for personal use and with people you support. **This checklist can be downloaded from [www.surreypb.org.uk](http://www.surreypb.org.uk)**

You still need dental check ups if you have no teeth.  
Dentists check gums as well as teeth.

Special Care Dentists are trained to treat people with special needs who find it hard to use an ordinary dentist.



Community dental services may be based in hospitals, specialist health centres and mobile clinics.

They may offer home visits or visits to nursing and care homes.

# THINGS TO CHECK

1

Do you need to book a check up at the dentist?



When do you need to book a dental check up?



If your last check up was over a year ago, or you are not sure when you last had one.

For many people on benefits a dental check up is free.



If you have a problem with your teeth or your gums.



- Your gums bleed when you brush your teeth.
- Your teeth or mouth hurt when you eat or drink.
- Your breath smells.
- You get mouth ulcers.



If you need to find a dentist in your local area, or need a dentist in an emergency:

Phone NHS Direct on 0845 4647. Some areas have Emergency Dental Access Centres.

# THINGS TO CHECK

Some people might not be able to say that they have a problem with their teeth or gums. Their behaviour may change.



- They may not want to eat, or eat different things.
- They may touch or even hit their mouth.
- They may seem sad and withdrawn.

2

## Do you need more support to go to the dentist?



If you are scared of going to the dentist it is important that you get support.

It can help to visit the surgery to meet the staff before your check up.



Take a supporter you trust with you to your check up. They can help you to relax.

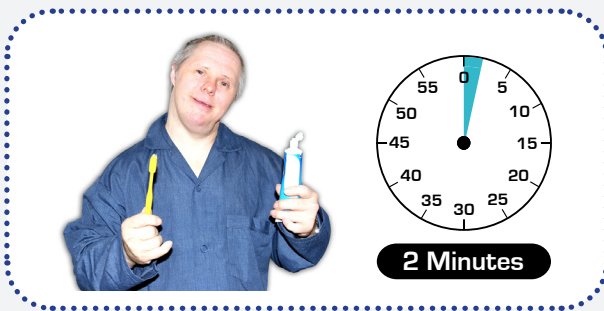


Many dentist surgeries are very good at helping nervous patients.

# THINGS TO CHECK

3

Do you need more support to keep your teeth and gums clean?



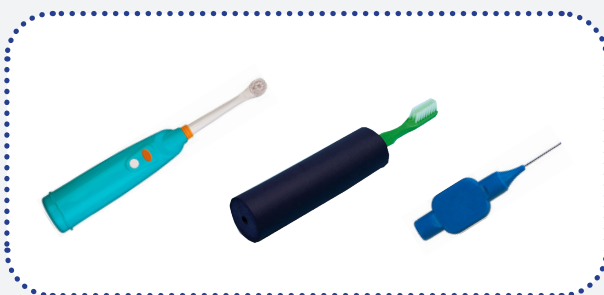
You need to brush your teeth with toothpaste twice a day for 2 minutes.

If you have no teeth brush your gums twice a day with a soft toothbrush and toothpaste.



Your dentist can show you how to brush your teeth properly.

Your dentist can tell you the best toothbrushes to use.



There are electric toothbrushes, special handles and brushes for cleaning between your teeth.



Dirty teeth and gums can cause chest infections because bacteria gets into your lungs.

This can be a serious illness and a big problem for some people with learning disabilities.

# THINGS TO CHECK

4

If you have false teeth do you need more support with them?



You should brush your false teeth every day with a soft toothbrush.



False teeth go out of shape if they dry out or get very hot. Only put them in cool water.



False teeth break easily. Clean them over a sink filled with cool water or a soft towel.



Tell your dentist if your false teeth are broken or uncomfortable to wear.

## Easy Health

Easyhealth is run by an organisation called Generate Opportunities Ltd.

There are videos and Easy Read leaflets about teeth designed by many different organisations.

Look in the 'Health Leaflets' and 'Health Videos' sections.



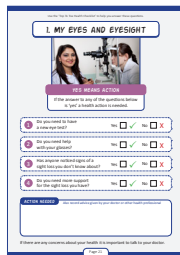
[www.easyhealth.org.uk](http://www.easyhealth.org.uk)

# USING THIS CHECKLIST

This checklist is a part of The Health Action Planning toolkit available from [www.surreypb.org.uk](http://www.surreypb.org.uk)

The Health Action Planning toolkit is free to use.

- There are 20 other checklists in the series covering a wide range of health issues.
- There is a Health Action Plan template for your checklist answers.



The Health Action Planning Toolkit was developed by Mike Leat from The Clear Communication People Ltd in partnership with Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust health professionals and other health professionals in Surrey.

Special thanks to members of the Health Action Planning Group for their support and advice: Phil Boulter, Matthew Box, Kathryn Fisher, Maria Gainsford, Gemma Hare, Patrick Howarth, Denise Souter and Susann Stone

The Health Action Planning Toolkit is intended as a aid to support people with learning disabilities to access the support and advice of qualified health professionals. The Clear Communication People Ltd take no responsibility for medical diagnosis, advice and treatment given in conjunction with the use of this checklist.

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The **Clear Communication** People Ltd

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