

# What is oral health?

A state of being free from mouth and facial pain, infection, and disease – allowing normal function and wellbeing.

## **What is dental plaque?**

A sticky biofilm of bacteria on teeth and gums that causes caries and gum disease.

**What are the two main dental diseases caused by plaque?**

Dental caries and periodontal (gum) disease.

**What is the most effective method of removing plaque?**

**Mechanical toothbrushing twice daily with fluoride toothpaste.**

# **What does oral health education aim to achieve?**

Encourage good habits that maintain healthy teeth, gums, and oral function throughout life.

# **What is dental biofilm composed of?**

**Bacteria, saliva, and food debris adhering to tooth surfaces.**

**How long does it take  
for plaque to form after  
cleaning?**

**Within 24 hours.**

**What can happen if plaque is not removed regularly?**

It hardens into calculus (tartar), leading to gingivitis and periodontitis.

# **What is the role of the dental nurse in oral health education?**

To reinforce advice, demonstrate oral hygiene aids, and motivate patients.

**What is the  
recommended  
frequency for brushing  
teeth?**

At least twice daily –  
last thing at night and  
one other time.

# **What are the main types of toothbrushes?**

Manual and powered (electric/oscillating).

**How long should a  
toothbrush be used  
before replacement?**

Every 3 months or when  
bristles become splayed.

**What is the  
recommended brushing  
time?**

**About 2 minutes each  
session.**

## **What is the Bass (Modified) technique?**

Bristles angled 45° to gum line, gentle circular motion along gum margin.

# **Why is the Bass technique recommended?**

Effectively removes  
plaque at the gum line  
without damaging  
tissue.

# **What is the Stillman technique?**

Bristles placed partly on gums and partly on teeth, moved in small circular motions.

## **What is the Fones technique?**

Circular brushing motion  
with teeth closed –  
suitable for children or  
those with limited  
dexterity.

# **What is an interdental brush used for?**

Cleaning between teeth where toothbrush bristles can't reach.

**When should flossing or interdental cleaning be done?**

Once daily, ideally before brushing at night.

# **What should be advised for patients with orthodontic appliances?**

Use interdental  
brushes, orthodontic  
brushes, and fluoride  
mouthwash daily.

## **What is fluoride?**

A natural mineral that strengthens enamel and prevents dental decay.

# How does fluoride prevent caries?

It promotes remineralisation and reduces acid attack from plaque bacteria.

**What is the ideal concentration of fluoride in toothpaste for adults?**

**1,350–1,500 ppm  
(parts per million).**

**What strength of fluoride toothpaste is recommended for high caries risk adults?**

2,800–5,000 ppm under dental supervision.

**What strength of fluoride toothpaste is suitable for children under 3 years?**

At least 1,000 ppm, a smear amount only.

# **How should fluoride toothpaste be used?**

Spit out excess after brushing, do not rinse with water.

# **Why should patients avoid rinsing after brushing?**

Rinsing washes away fluoride, reducing its protective effect.

# What is fluoride varnish?

A professional treatment applied to teeth (2.2–2.6% fluoride) to prevent decay.

**How often should fluoride varnish be applied for children?**

At least twice yearly.

# **What is water fluoridation?**

Controlled addition of fluoride to public water supply (around 1 ppm).

**What is the main benefit of fluoride mouthrinses?**

Extra protection against caries, especially for orthodontic or high-risk patients.

**What condition may occur from excessive fluoride ingestion during tooth development?**

Dental fluorosis – mottled enamel appearance.

# **Why is diet important for oral health?**

Frequent sugar intake  
increases caries risk;  
acidic foods can cause  
erosion.

**Which nutrient helps  
repair soft tissue and  
gums?**

Vitamin C.

**What nutrients support healthy teeth and bone?**

Calcium, phosphate, and vitamin D.

**What advice should be given about sugary foods and drinks?**

Limit frequency, not total amount – avoid between meals.

# What are free sugars?

Added sugars and those in honey, syrups, and fruit juices.

**What is the  
recommended sugar  
intake for adults?**

**No more than 5% of total  
daily energy ( $\approx$ 30g for  
adults).**

# **What drinks can cause dental erosion?**

Fizzy drinks, fruit juices, energy drinks, and acidic foods.

## **How should patients reduce erosion risk?**

Limit acidic drinks, use a straw, and wait 30 mins before brushing.

# **What causes dental caries?**

**Demineralisation of enamel by acids produced from plaque bacteria digesting sugars.**

**What are the four factors needed for caries to develop?**

Tooth surface,  
bacteria, fermentable  
carbohydrates, and  
time.

# **What are the stages of caries development?**

**Demineralisation → white spot lesion → cavity formation → pulp involvement.**

# **How can dental caries be prevented?**

Brushing twice daily with fluoride toothpaste, reducing sugar intake, and attending regular check-ups.

## **What is gingivitis?**

Inflammation of the gums due to plaque accumulation – reversible with good hygiene.

# **What are the signs of gingivitis?**

**Redness, swelling,  
bleeding gums on  
brushing.**

# **What is periodontitis?**

Advanced gum disease  
causing bone loss,  
pocketing, and potential  
tooth loss.

**What is the main cause of halitosis (bad breath)?**

Bacterial breakdown of food debris and poor oral hygiene.

# **What are early signs of periodontal disease?**

Bleeding gums, bad breath, loose teeth, and receding gums.

# **What oral hygiene advice helps prevent gum disease?**

Brush effectively twice daily, clean interdentally, and attend professional scaling.

**Why is patient  
motivation important in  
oral health education?**

Behaviour change relies  
on understanding and  
consistent self-care  
habits.

**What is the most effective way to motivate a patient?**

Tailor advice to their needs and demonstrate positive reinforcement.

# **What are the key communication skills for dental nurses?**

Active listening, empathy, clear explanations, and encouragement.

# **What is verbal communication?**

Use of spoken words to exchange information.

# **What is non-verbal communication?**

Body language, eye contact, gestures, and tone of voice.

**What are  
communication  
barriers?**

Jargon, cultural differences, anxiety, noise, and lack of understanding.

# **What is patient-centred care?**

Focusing on the patient's individual needs, preferences, and involvement in decision-making.

**What is the purpose of open-ended questions?**

Encourages patients to express opinions and understanding.

# **Why is it important to build rapport with patients?**

Builds trust, improves cooperation, and enhances treatment outcomes.

**What should be avoided  
when educating  
patients?**

Using complex dental  
terms or judgmental  
language.

# **What is oral health promotion?**

The process of enabling individuals and communities to improve and maintain oral health.

**What are the key principles of health promotion?**

Education,  
empowerment,  
prevention, and  
partnership.

# **What is the dental nurse's role in health promotion?**

To deliver oral health messages, support prevention clinics, and reinforce advice.

# **What is a community-based oral health campaign?**

A program that promotes good oral hygiene practices at population level (e.g., school visits).

**Give an example of a UK oral health promotion initiative.**

‘Delivering Better Oral Health’ guidance or ‘Smile4Life’ campaign.

# **What is the benefit of a multidisciplinary approach in oral health promotion?**

Combines efforts of dental teams, schools, and public health services for wider impact.

# **What are the three levels of disease prevention?**

Primary (prevent onset), Secondary (early detection), Tertiary (limit progression).

# **What is primary prevention in dentistry?**

Fluoride use, plaque control, and dietary advice.

# **What is secondary prevention in dentistry?**

Early detection and management of caries or gum disease.

# **What is tertiary prevention in dentistry?**

Restorative or prosthetic treatment to restore function.

# **Why are children a key group for oral health education?**

Early habit formation prevents lifelong disease.

**What advice should be given to parents about baby teeth?**

Brush twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and avoid sugary snacks/drinks.

**What advice should be given to pregnant patients?**

Maintain hygiene, reduce sugary snacks, and continue dental visits safely.

# **Why do pregnant women have higher gum inflammation risk?**

Hormonal changes increase blood flow to gums, causing swelling and bleeding.

**What advice should be  
given to elderly  
patients?**

Keep cleaning dentures,  
maintain regular dental  
visits, and manage dry  
mouth.

**What is the main oral health challenge in elderly patients?**

Root caries, recession, and reduced saliva flow due to medications.

**What oral hygiene aids are best for patients with limited dexterity?**

Electric toothbrushes, adapted handles, or interdental brushes with grips.

# **Why is tailored advice important for special needs patients?**

Adapted techniques increase cooperation and improve outcomes.

**What is the importance of record-keeping in oral health education?**

Ensures continuity of care and tracks patient progress.

**When should oral hygiene advice be given to patients?**

Before, during, and after treatment – continuously reinforced.

**What should be documented after giving oral health advice?**

Topics discussed, products recommended, and patient understanding.

**What is the benefit of using visual aids during education?**

Improves understanding and retention of information.

**What is the GDC's  
expectation of dental  
professionals in oral  
health promotion?**

To encourage  
prevention and  
educate patients as  
part of professional  
duty of care.

# **Why is oral health education central to dental nursing practice?**

It empowers patients to prevent disease and supports overall public health.