

# Avoiding tooth decay

Tooth decay is one of the most common complaints in the world, and is particularly common in children and young adults. If left untreated, it can lead to toothache, painful dental abscesses and even tooth loss.



The good news is that tooth decay can be prevented, simply by following a healthy diet and having a good daily oral healthcare routine.

Decay is caused by plaque, a constantly-forming, clear and sticky film of bacteria which collects on your teeth.

Every time you eat or drink anything containing sugars (natural or otherwise), the sugars react with the plaque, forming acids which then attack the teeth and start to dissolve the enamel (the hard outer coating of your teeth).

These attacks can last for up to an hour after eating or drinking. Your saliva can mend the damage caused to the enamel, but it needs time in which to do this. If you are constantly eating and drinking sugary substances, the saliva does not get a chance to heal the enamel, and decay occurs.

The first step to preventing decay is to avoid consuming sugary food and drink, or limit it to mealtimes only.

It is vital to brush your teeth thoroughly twice a day, especially at bedtime, using a fluoride toothpaste. Make sure you brush all the surfaces of your teeth, and clean around the gumline and between your teeth.

Visiting us for regular check-ups is important too. We can spot any problems and treat them at an early stage, and can advise you on the best way to care for your teeth.

# Enhancing your smile

If you have ever felt self-conscious about your smile or simply wished your teeth looked better, we can help.

At the Blue Court Dental Centre we offer a wide choice of smile enhancements from whole smile makeovers to simply disguising small imperfections such as chips and cracks.



Here is one example of the work that we can carry out. Dr Dixit transformed this patient's smile by replacing her old, tired, upper front crowns. The patient was thrilled with the result and the new confidence it has given her – she hasn't stopped smiling since!



Tooth whitening is becoming increasingly popular. Teeth naturally become darker as you get older, so having your teeth whitened with our professional Zoom!® system can make you look younger as well as removing stains caused by smoking, red wine, tea and coffee.

Veneers can also have a huge impact on your smile, covering a variety of imperfections, from chips and gaps to crooked, misshapen or dark and stained teeth. They are very thin layers of natural-looking porcelain that are bonded to the front of your teeth. They can completely transform your smile.

To find out more about how we can help enhance your smile, please call to arrange a no-obligation initial consultation.



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# blue court smiles

## Welcome

Our latest newsletter is bursting with loads of interesting articles! Find out just how much work your tongue carries out each day, and discover the world's most difficult tongue twister! Plus you can find out the latest on crowns, read how chillies might help you with future visits to us, and see why a UK charity has warned against dental tourism. We hope you enjoy reading it!

## New patients

If you have any friends or relatives that are looking for high quality dental care delivered in comfortable and relaxed surroundings please do tell them about us. We always welcome new patients.



Edited in association with the  
British Dental Health Foundation

Articles contained within this newsletter are provided for information only and should not be taken as a recommendation for any specific dental treatment or procedure. For further advice contact the dental practice.  
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## In this issue...

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## Hot news!

Medical researchers have created a new chilli-based anaesthetic which appears to prevent pain without causing numbness.



The development could have a big impact on dentistry in the future, with patients potentially able to have an anaesthetic that would allow them to have painfree dentistry without the lingering numbness that we associate with dental injections.

The anaesthetic was created by scientists from capsaicin – the naturally-occurring substance in chillis that makes them hot to the taste – and a derivative of the anaesthetic drug lignocaine.

So far it has only been tested on rats, and trials on humans are unlikely to take place before 2010.

## Crowning glory

Dental crowns can make a huge difference to the way your smile looks and your self-confidence, as well as helping you to chew without difficulties.

Today's crowns are extremely natural in looks and feel. They are a far cry from the older ones which often looked and felt unrealistic.

In fact, modern crowns are such an improvement over the older ones that we are seeing an increasing number of patients asking to have their crowns replaced as part of a smile enhancement.

Crowns are used to cover the top, visible part of teeth which may have broken, or have been weakened by decay or large fillings. They restore the tooth to its

normal shape and size, strengthening it and improving the way it looks.

They are often recommended after root canal treatment to help strengthen the tooth and protect the root filling, or to provide a secure foundation for bridgework.

Crowns can be made of a variety of materials, but most modern ones are made of porcelain or ceramic.

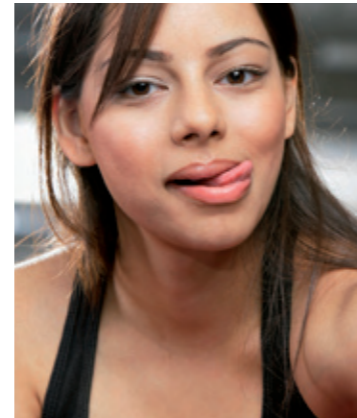
Crowns require a great degree of skill and craftsmanship to make them fit perfectly and be a natural match to your other teeth, and their cost reflects this. However, they are an excellent investment, and with proper care will continue to benefit you for many years to come.

The tongue – not something most of us give much thought to, yet it carries out many important functions day in, day out, helping us to talk, eat, taste and even fight germs.

## The talented tongue

The tongue is made up of lots of muscles, which run in different directions to enable it to carry out its many functions. The front part is very flexible, and helps you to speak properly as well as moving food around your mouth so you can chew it. The back of the tongue also helps with eating by pushing the food backwards into your oesophagus.

It is covered with tiny hair-like stubs of tissue called papillae, which are part of the taste bud mechanism. This is vital to our health, as the taste buds warn us when we are eating or drinking something which tastes bitter or just 'wrong' – often these substances are those which are harmful to us.



It even helps to keep you healthy – the back section of the tongue contains the lingual tonsil, which contains cells that help filter out harmful germs.

Generally speaking, the tongue does a pretty good job of keeping itself healthy, but you can help it

by following a good oral healthcare routine, including cleaning your tongue either by brushing it or by using a tongue scraper.

## Tongue twister

According to the Guinness Book of Records, the world's hardest tongue twister is 'The sixth sick sheik's sixth sheep's sick' – see if you can master it!



## 'Dental tourism' a massive risk!

warns British Dental Health Foundation

Travelling abroad for dental treatment has been labelled a 'massive risk' by dental charity the British Dental Health Foundation.

Dental tourism, in which people go abroad to take advantage of cheaper prices, is becoming big business.

But the Foundation is seeing increased numbers of calls to its helpline from patients who have returned home from "dental holidays" in severe pain and needing further and costly treatment to correct poor quality dental work.

Chief executive Dr Nigel Carter said: "So-called 'dental holidays' are presented as a cheap and hassle-free alternative to getting treatment in this country, but we know from calls to our Dental Helpline that if things go wrong then nothing could be further from the truth.

"It is totally unrealistic to expect that complicated



procedures that can take months to complete in this country can be carried out to the same high standard while on a 10-day holiday – but unfortunately that is the myth being sold to people."

He urged people to consider what they would do if something did go wrong. 'For example are you willing to fly back? What are your legal rights as a foreign patient? Are you prepared to go through the courts? Do you have the money required to pay another dentist to correct the treatment?'

Anyone considering having expensive dental treatment should ask us about it first – if we cannot help you ourselves we can refer you to someone who can.

## Top tips

Clean between your teeth once a day to help prevent tooth decay, bad breath and gum disease. Various products are available for this including floss and tiny inter-dental brushes – we can advise you which is best suited to your teeth.