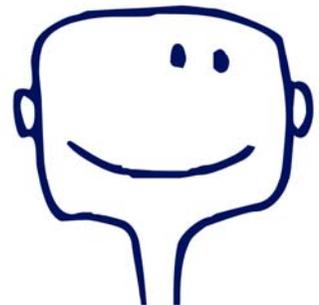


# The smile file



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# Introduction

The aim of this resource is to support workplaces who want to promote good oral health. Oral health may not be viewed as a priority in the workplace however there are real benefits to including it as part of an overall programme of workplace health improvement:

- Poor oral health can impact on work attendance and performance.
- Good oral health can contribute towards a good first impression when dealing with clients and the general public.
- A commitment to employee health can support a positive working relationship between management and employees.

Oral Health is an important aspect of general health – good oral health lets us eat, drink, communicate and socialise without painful disease, discomfort or embarrassment. It has been shown to make a difference to our general well being and the way that we feel about ourselves and how we are treated by others.

Dental decay and gum disease are not an inevitable part of life. They can be prevented and this can be made easier by making workplaces healthy environments that support balanced healthy choices.

Promoting oral health in the workplace is based around supporting three key behaviours:

- Brush teeth thoroughly twice everyday with fluoride toothpaste—effective tooth brushing will benefit everyone irrespective of age and dental condition. Adults and children over age seven should use toothpaste that contains around 1500 parts per million fluoride. Babies and children up to age seven should use toothpaste that contains around 1000 parts per million fluoride.
- Cut down on how often you have foods, snacks and drinks containing sugar and try to keep these to mealtimes only.
- Register with a dentist and visit regularly for check ups.

# How the Workplace can promote Oral Health

## - Creating a workplace environment that supports good oral health

- Consult with employees on their health needs including oral health. Ask your Healthy Working Lives Team for support and information about doing this.
- Incorporate oral health into healthy eating, vending and smoking policies. This could be done with assistance from your Healthy Working Lives Team.
- Provide and promote drinking water to all staff at all times
- Ensure that your workplace food policy promotes the appropriate healthy choices particularly sugar-free options. If you have a workplace canteen make sure there is always a balance of different food options available including good quality fruit and vegetables and a range of starchy foods such as different types of bread, crackers, pancakes and pitta breads.
- Ensure snack bars or vending machines have a balanced range of options in them. Arrange sugar free, low sugar and low fat options near the front of the snack bar or at eye level in vending machines and try not to overprice the healthy ones. Keep checkout areas free of confectionary. Have good quality fruit in an attractive display instead.
- Use all available opportunities to promote and market healthy choices among employees:
  - During meetings have a fruit platter available to staff instead of biscuits
  - Provide a toaster to allow a different snack option
  - Provide sugar free sweeteners for tea and coffee if required
  - Have fruit and vegetable taster sessions for staff – try team challenges to encourage tasting of new or different types of fruit and vegetables.
  - Provide packets of sugar free chewing gum alongside a honesty box but make sure employees can dispose of their gum appropriately.
  - Bulk buy toothpaste and toothbrushes to sell at cost price, for employees and their families, as a one off promotion or on a regular basis (contact your Healthy Working Lives team to obtain contact details of suppliers).

See Health Promotion Resources section - How to promote and market healthy choices within the workplace

- Run information sessions or workshops for employees to promote healthy eating and good oral health and provide healthy ideas for snacks and packed lunches.

See Health Promotion Resources section - Workplace Desktop and Drawer Snack Display and Weight Wise @ Work leaflets.

To help plan for these events refer to see Health Promotion Resources section – Resources and Teaching Kits available.

- Support national and local campaigns such as National Food Safety Week, National Smile Month (May / June) and Mouth Cancer Action Month (November). Further information on these campaigns can be found on the web pages section.
- Set up simple healthy eating or oral health displays in main reception areas, foyer areas or staff information boards. Choose a venue which has maximum exposure to a large number of staff.  
See Health Promotion Resources section - For details of resources, leaflet, posters and displays available.
- Support colleagues who are trying to eat healthily or lose weight and encourage them to form a support group.  
See Health Promotion Resources section - How to run your own workplace weight management programme
- Give employees the option of contributing to a weekly fruit order from a local green grocer – involve staff in the ordering process and buy produce in season as it tends to be cheaper.
- Allow staff to toothbrush during their working day but ensure clean and hygienic facilities i.e. a designated sink for staff who wish to toothbrush at a break time.
- If the employer provides health insurance try to include dental cover.
- If practical, introduce flexible working to allow employees time during the day to attend dental appointments

# Health Information- Key Areas

## Diet and Oral Health

Tooth decay happens when acid in the mouth, made by plaque, attacks the top enamel surface of the teeth. If these acid attacks happen frequently then the enamel surface breaks down and a cavity forms. The acid is made from sugar by plaque so cutting down on how often and how much sugar you eat will lessen your risk of dental decay.

### Added Sugars

Most people in the UK are eating too much added sugar.

Added sugars are found in many everyday foods and drinks such as sweets, biscuits, chocolate, cakes, preserves, ice-cream, sweetened breakfast cereals and in fizzy and juice drinks.

Frequent consumption of these foods/drinks may result in dental decay and excessive weight gain.



As much as  $\frac{3}{4}$  of total sugars in the diet are those which have been added during manufacturing, cooking /baking or at the table.

Consuming foods and drinks containing added sugar between meals is more harmful to teeth than them being taken at a mealtime. Therefore choose sugar free snacks in between meals. For example at your morning break choose an apple instead of a chocolate biscuit and have a glass of water or a cup of tea (no sugar) instead of a can of cola. **For more ideas of healthy snacks see Health Promotion Resources section - Workplace Desktop and Drawer Snack Display or Weight Wise @ Work leaflet – Healthier Snacking @ Work.**

The 'natural' sugars found in fruits, vegetables and milk are much less likely to cause tooth decay than the sugars which have been added to foods and drinks. Therefore fruit - fresh, frozen or tinned in natural juice and vegetables should be promoted as healthy between meal snacks.

Aim to eat **5 portions of fruit and vegetables** each day. For more information on 'what a portion is' and simple, tasty ideas that will increase how much fruit and vegetables you eat visit [www.5aday.nhs.uk](http://www.5aday.nhs.uk).



**Starchy foods** such as bread or toast (preferably wholemeal or wholegrain), breadsticks, plain rice cakes, crackers, crispbreads or unsweetened cereals e.g. Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Ready Brek should also be promoted as **healthy snacks between meal times**. Sugary spreads such as jam, honey, other conserves and chocolate spreads should be kept to a minimum and eaten at meal times instead use spreads such as low fat margarine, low fat cheese spread, cottage cheese or savoury spreads.



## Drinks

Between meals the **safest drinks** in terms of oral health are plain water, milk, tea or coffee (without sugar).

***Support employees to drink more water by having ready access to drinking water for all employees in the workplace and encourage everyone to aim for 6-8 glasses a day.***



Pure fruit juices and fruit smoothies are healthy choices and they can contribute towards our 5 fruit and vegetables portions a day. But you can only count these juices as **1 portion** a day, however much you drink. The sugars found in these drinks can lead to tooth decay. ***Therefore these drinks are not recommended between meals and are best taken at mealtimes.***

**Dried fruits** such as raisins, apricots, sultanas, banana chips have a high concentration of sugars in them. Therefore **eat these fruits at a mealtime instead of as an in-between meal snack.** One portion (or a small handful) can help contribute towards our 5 a day target. Try sprinkling dried fruit over your breakfast cereal or finish your lunch off with a small handful of banana chips or raisins.



Chewing **sugar-free gum** has a positive benefit for oral health by increasing salivary flow which helps to neutralise acids in the mouth and remove food debris from the teeth.

## Acidic Drinks

Frequent drinking of **acidic drinks** such as fizzy drinks including sugar free, fruit juices, squash, sports drinks, alcopops or fruit teas can result in **dental erosion**. Therefore these drinks should be taken in moderation and only at mealtimes.



The risk of dental erosion may be reduced by drinking acidic drinks through a narrow straw placed behind the front teeth and well to the back of the mouth.

Acidic drinks will cause less dental damage if drunk chilled and are not swished around the mouth.

When eating or drinking something acidic, the acid softens the tooth-surface and if you brush your teeth immediately the tooth surface is more susceptible to abrasion. Therefore it is best to avoid brushing teeth for about an hour after consuming something acidic. Try chewing sugar free gum until it is time to brush.

### Check the Food Labels

Watch out for foods labelled '**Low in Fat**' for example cereal bars or low fat chocolate biscuits. These foods can contain a lot of added sugar so it is best to limit the amount you eat and only eat these foods at mealtimes instead of snacking on them throughout the day.

Always check the nutrition labels and **choose foods and drinks which have a low sugar content.**

**Low is 5g sugars or less per 100g**

**High is more than 15g sugars per 100g**

If the amount of sugars per 100g is in between these figures, then that is a medium level of sugars.

To establish if a food or drink has a lot of added sugars, refer to the **ingredients list** – added sugars must be included in this list. This list always starts with the biggest ingredient first.

**Watch out for other words** used on labels to describe 'added sugar' – such as **sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, dextrose, hydrolysed starch, and invert sugar, corn syrup and honey.** If one of these appears at the start of the ingredients list then the product is likely to be high in added sugars.

Bear in mind that sugar figures in a nutritional panel is the amount of 'total sugars' in the food or drink. It includes the natural sugars found in fruit and milk as well as the sugars that have been added. Therefore two products can contain similar amounts of total sugar but the product containing lots of fruits and milks would be a healthier choice than the one with lots of added sugar.



***Support everyone in the workplace to reduce both the total amount of sugar that they eat and how often they have food and drink with added sugars.***

***This will ultimately improve the dental health of your workforce.***

***The ideal target is a maximum of 4 sugar intakes a day:***

***- 3 of these should be taken at meal time plus one additional snack and / or sugar containing drink***

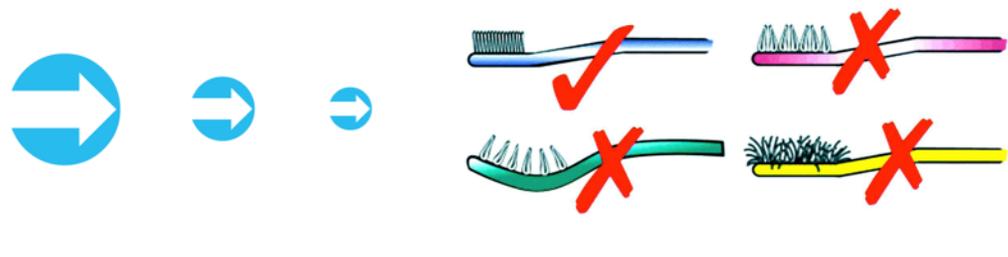
***- All other snacks and drinks should be sugar-free***

# Toothbrushing and Dental Hygiene

Twice daily toothbrushing with a fluoride toothpaste helps prevent both dental decay and gum disease.

## The Right Toothbrush

- A toothbrush should have an easy to grip handle with a small head and a soft-to-medium texture.
- Toothbrushes should be replaced every three months.
- Your dentist, hygienist or oral health promoter can advise on correct brushing techniques.



## Toothpaste

- Thorough daily tooth brushing for two minutes with fluoride toothpaste is an effective way of reducing both dental decay and gum disease.
- Toothpastes containing around 1500ppm fluoride are suitable for use by adults and children over the age of seven. Babies and children under seven should use toothpaste containing around 1000ppm fluoride. Always check the back of the toothpaste box or tube to see the concentration of fluoride.
- Use only a pea size amount of toothpaste when brushing.
- After tooth brushing spit out excess toothpaste but do not rinse mouth with water.

## **Electric Toothbrushes**

There is evidence to show that powered toothbrushes can clean teeth and gums more effectively than manual brushing, this may benefit those with poor dental hygiene or limited manual dexterity.

## **Oral Health Aids**

Dental floss, dental tape or interdental brushes are very effective in removing plaque from between the teeth, and should be used in addition to tooth brushing not as an alternative. A dentist or hygienist can give advice on how to use floss, as care must be taken not to damage the gums.

## **Mouth Rinses**

Careful and effective daily tooth brushing is sufficient for good oral hygiene but if you wish to use a mouth rinse there are both fluoride and antiseptic mouth rinses available, which are used to help combat dental decay and gum disease. Fluoride mouth rinses are effective and available for home use and provide extra protection against tooth decay. Chlorhexidine is an antiseptic mouth rinse, which also comes in the form of a gel and spray. It is used to treat gum diseases but is not recommended for long-term use as it can stain teeth and impair taste.

# Dental care

## Dental Registration

Everyone should be registered with a dentist and see someone from the dental team at least once a year. Regular visits are recommended for routine examinations of the whole mouth. Regular appointments give the dentist and hygienist the opportunity to undertake preventive care and treatment tailored to individual need. From April 2010 dental registration is continuous. [Find information on dental registration in Forth Valley.](#)

## NHS Dental Treatment charges

You can get free dental treatment if you:-

- Are under 18 years old
- Are aged 18 and in full-time education
- Are pregnant
- Have had a baby in the previous 12 months, or have had a stillborn baby in the previous 12 months
- You are named on a valid HC2 certificate
- You are named on a valid HC3 certificate
- You are, or your partner is, getting Income Support
- You are, or your partner is, getting Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- You are, or your partner is, getting tax credits and meeting qualifying conditions

If you can't get free treatment or help with the cost then you pay 80% of the cost of the treatment up to a maximum, currently £384 (as at 1st September 2009).

## Dental Visits

It is important that all ages visit the dental team. Advances in dental techniques mean that everyone can be helped to feel more relaxed about going to the dentist. If you feel anxious then talk to a member of the dental team and they will support you. Teeth can now be treated in such a way that the fillings and dentures can blend with natural teeth. There are a lot of different treatment options that can enhance your teeth and make you feel more confident about your smile but your dentist will be able to explain what care is best for you. [Contact your dental team for more information.](#)

**If you play contact sport ask your Dentist about a Mouthguard and protect that smile!**

## What to do if you need Emergency Dental Treatment

### Registered patients

During the daytime, if you are registered with a dentist you should telephone your registered practice.

### Unregistered patients

During the daytime if you are not registered with a dentist, you should telephone the **Forth Valley Dental Helpline on 0844 800 6886** where we will arrange for a Dental Nurse Advisor to contact you and assess the urgency of your symptoms. She will also advise on pain relief and if appropriate will arrange for you to be given an appointment at our dental centres.

As there are a limited number of appointments we would ask that you telephone as soon as possible.

### During the evening (Monday - Friday 6pm – 8am)

#### All patients

All patients should telephone **NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24**.

#### *If the problem is a recognised dental emergency*

- Facial or dental trauma
- Oral or facial swelling that is significant and worsening
- Post-extraction bleeding that the patient is not able to control with local pressure
- Dental infection causing acute illness or raised temperature

You will be advised to attend your local Accident & Emergency Department.

#### *If you have an urgent dental problem*

- Severe pain
- Mild swelling
- Chronic infection

You will be given advice to control your symptoms. If you are registered you will be asked to contact your registered dental practice the following morning.

If you are not registered you will be given an appointment to attend one of the dental centres of the local Salaried Dental Service.

## **Weekends and Public Holidays**

### **All Patients**

All patients should telephone **NHS 24 on 08454 24 24 24**.

#### ***If the problem is a recognised dental emergency***

- Facial or dental trauma
- Oral or facial swelling that is significant and worsening
- Post-extraction bleeding that the patient is not able to control with local pressure
- Dental infection causing acute illness or raised temperature

You will be advised to attend your local Accident & Emergency Department.

#### ***If you have an urgent dental problem***

- Severe pain
- Mild swelling
- Chronic infection

You will be given advice to control your symptoms. If you are registered you will be asked to contact your registered dental practice the following morning.

If you are not registered you will be given an appointment to attend one of the dental centres of the local Salaried Dental Service.

### **Charges for emergency dental treatment**

You will be charged the standard NHS rate for any dental treatment you receive, so please bring a means of payment with you.

You will not have to pay if you are usually exempt from charges, but you will need to bring the correct form of proof with you. People normally exempt include those under 18 (18 and under if in full time education), and women who are pregnant or who have given birth in the past 12 months. You may be exempt if you receive certain state benefits. For more information, read "Are you entitled to help with health costs?" a leaflet you can pick up when visiting your GP or dentist.

Emergency treatment for the relief of pain rarely exceeds £30

# Oral Cancer

(cancer of the mouth including the tongue, gums, lining of the mouth, lips and throat)

It is important to examine the mouth on a regular basis. A mouth ulcer which has not healed after three weeks, red or white patches or other unusual changes in the mouth, even if they are pain free, should be seen by a dentist as soon as possible for an examination.

Oral cancer is most common in people over 40 who smoke or drink alcohol however the number of young people and women developing the condition has been increasing in recent years.

If mouth cancer is diagnosed in its early stages it can respond well to treatment with the potential for complete recovery however **early diagnosis is very important.**

## Cut the risk of developing Oral Cancer by;

- **Stopping Smoking.** Smoking is a major cause of mouth cancer. The risk of developing mouth cancer is the same for users of all forms of tobacco, including chewing tobacco.

**Smoking affects the health of all your mouth as well as your general health. Gum disease, bad breath and unsightly staining are all caused by smoking. You can increase your chance of quitting by up to 4 times if you join a smoking cessation group or get face to face support and you'll feel the benefits straightaway.**

[Find out more about quitting smoking in Forth Valley](#)

or contact 01786 431125 for more information

- If you drink alcohol then stay within recommended limits - excessive alcohol intake is another major risk factor when it comes to Oral Cancer.

[Find out more about alcohol and drinking within recommended limits.](#)

- Help prevent lip cancer by using a hat and sunscreen to avoid excessive exposure to sunlight.
- Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day. Try to eat a variety of different coloured fruit and vegetables.
- Visit the dentist at least once a year as regular dental checks are important.

**People who smoke and drink to excess have a much higher risk of developing oral cancer.**

# Top Ten Tips to Promote Healthy Teeth

1. Cut down on how much sugar you eat. Avoid having sugary foods and drinks between meals as this is more harmful to teeth than having them at a mealtime.
2. If you need a snack between meals then choose naturally sweetened foods such as fruit or starchy foods such as bread and crackers.
3. Drink more water – aim for 6-8 glasses a day.
4. Pure fruit juices and fruit smoothies should be taken at mealtimes and are not recommended as between meal drinks.
5. Dried fruit should only be consumed during mealtimes and not taken as a snack throughout the day.
6. Chewing sugar-free gum helps promote good oral health.
7. Sugary, fizzy or acidic drinks should only be taken in moderation and only during mealtimes. Fizzy drinks cause less damage if taken chilled and drunk through a straw and are not swished around the mouth.
8. Remember to check the nutrition labels and choose foods and drinks which are low in added sugar. Watch out for hidden sugars and foods labelled 'Low Fat' which can contain a lot of sugar!
9. Brush teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. Check the back of the toothpaste box or tube to make sure it has the right concentration of fluoride.
10. Make sure you are registered with a dentist and visit for regular check ups.

# Websites

[healthyworkinglives.com](http://healthyworkinglives.com)

Further information on Healthy Working Lives with local contact details

[www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)

Access a range of downloadable Food Fact sheets on a wide range of diet and health topics including – ‘Confused about Sugar’ or ‘Help yourself to healthy snacks.’

[www.bdaweightwise.com](http://www.bdaweightwise.com)

This interactive website is packed with loads of practical advice and support to help people manage their weight.

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

British Dental Health Foundation—Working to improve oral health. This site has details of useful links and information on National Smile Week.

[Childsmile](http://Childsmile)

Childsmile is a national programme to improve the dental health of children in Scotland.

[Scottish Dental](http://Scottish Dental)

This site provides information on dentistry for the public and oral health professionals.

[www.nhsforthvalley.com/healthpromotion](http://www.nhsforthvalley.com/healthpromotion)

Click ‘Oral Health’ or ‘Nutrition’ for details of resources available and useful links.



[www.eatwell.gov.uk](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk)

This Food Standards Agency site contains reliable and practical advice on healthy eating. It also has a complete section on sugar which offers practical tips on how to reduce the amount in the diet.

[www.takelifeon.co.uk](http://www.takelifeon.co.uk)

This website provides simple steps to healthier eating, being more active and reducing alcohol intake.

[www.5aday.nhs.uk](http://www.5aday.nhs.uk)

This website contains tips on how to eat more fruit and vegetables, details of what counts as a portion and it has a wide range of downloadable resources including fact sheets, teaching resources and recipe booklets.

# Health Promotion Resources and Displays

The resources below can either be borrowed from NHS Forth Valley – HIRS, downloaded from our Health Promotion website or accessed via the external websites listed.



## **Sugar Display**

Raises awareness of the amount of added sugars in common snack. The resource can be used as a display or as a quiz to guess the amounts of sugar.

(Order HIRS NUT 74/K)



## **Workplace Swap and Save Food Model Display**

Contains a wide range of snack food and drink models. Sugar and fat cubes have been used in the display to illustrate the amount of sugar and fats in the foods. Highlights how you can swap and save calories, sugar and fat.

(Order HIRS—WKH 14K)



### **Workplace Desktop and Drawer Snack Display**

Contains a wide range of healthy snacks which could be kept in your desk at work. The snacks suggested in this display do not have to be refrigerated and could provide ideas for workplace vending machines. This resource also contains photocopyable handouts on snacking.

(Order HIRS-WKH 12/K)

### **How to run your own workplace weight management programme**

This workplace weight management programme has been designed to support workplaces who wish to run a weight management course for their staff. It aims to give those facilitating the course, whether they have a healthcare background or not, the confidence to plan and deliver weight management sessions within their workplace.

Download from [www.nhsforthvalley.com/healthpromotion](http://www.nhsforthvalley.com/healthpromotion) then click 'Nutrition' then 'Workplace'.



### **Promoting Healthy Choices in the workplace**

This document provides some useful ideas on how to promote or market healthy food choices within your workplace.

Download from [www.nhsforthvalley.com/healthpromotion](http://www.nhsforthvalley.com/healthpromotion) then click 'Nutrition' then 'Workplace'.



### **Healthy Eating Leaflets**

Set of 8 A5 leaflets can be used individually or as a set of 8. They support the Scottish Executive's key dietary targets - topics include general healthy eating, breakfast, water, fruit, vegetables, starchy carbohydrates, oily fish and salt. These leaflets are intended for use with the general public.

(Order HIRS– NUT 21/L to NUT 28/L)

Can be used with the matching display panels below.



### **Eating for Health - Display Panels**

Set of 8 large posters for use on display boards illustrating the key dietary targets. These can be used in workplaces, community centres, health centres, health fairs, parents evenings or exhibitions.

(Order HIRS—NUT 07/K1 or K2 or K3)

Can be used with the matching Healthy Eating Leaflets above.

### **British Dietetic Association – Food Factsheets**

Access free downloadable food fact sheets on a wide range of diet and health topics including; Confused about sugar/Help yourself to healthy snacks/Fluid why you need it and how to get it.

To view all of the latest food fact sheets log onto [www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts](http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts)

## **Make Your Smile Count – Display Panel**

Large 3x3m display highlighting key dental messages

Email [sukhi.bains@nhs.net](mailto:sukhi.bains@nhs.net) or contact 01786 431112 to borrow for health events



### [Make Your Smile Count Posters and leaflets](#)

(Order HIRS Deh10/L for leaflet, Deh01/P –Deh12/P for posters)



### [Weight Wise @ Work](#)

The British Dietetic Association has developed some inspiring healthy eating resources which could be used during any work based health campaign.

There are 5 separate A4 fact sheets available: Health packed lunch @ Work/ Swap and Save @ Work/ Get Fit Get Active @ Work/Weight Wise Tips for Shift Workers/Healthier Snacking @ Work.

Contact John McCormick & Co LTD for more information on these resources and others they have available, Tel: 0141 429 4222 or email [gary@jmccormick.co.uk](mailto:gary@jmccormick.co.uk)