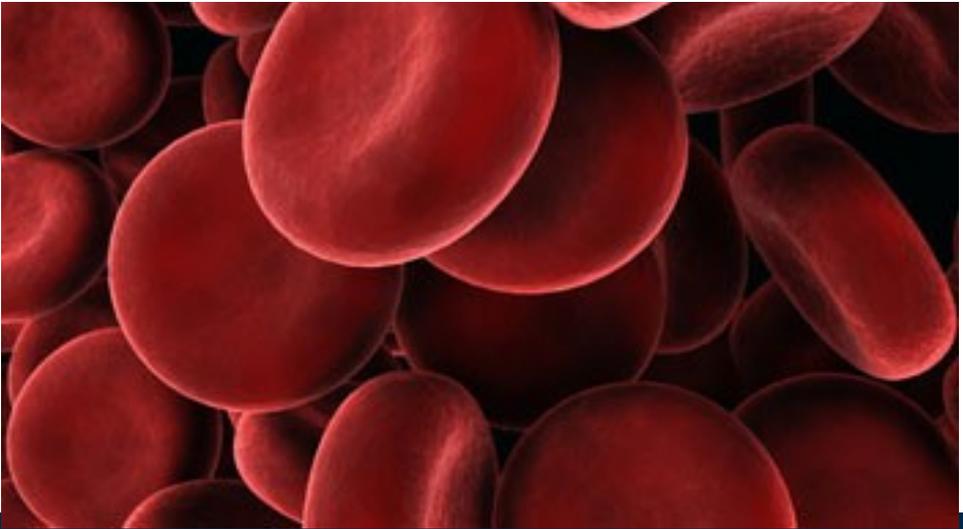




OXFORDSHIRE  
COMMUNITY  
DENTAL  
SERVICE



**Oxford Health**  
NHS Foundation Trust



Oxfordshire Community Dental Service

# Bleeding disorders and oral health care

Going the extra mile to make Oxfordshire smile

## What is tooth decay?

Tooth decay occurs if plaque, the sticky white substance that builds up on your teeth, breaks down sugar consumed within your diet to produce acid. This acid destroys teeth causing holes. Symptoms of tooth decay include:

- toothache
- sensitive teeth (for example when you eat something cold or sweet)
- grey, brown or black spots appearing on your teeth
- bad breath
- an unpleasant taste in your mouth

## I have a bleeding disorder? What is my risk of tooth decay?

Evidence shows that patients with bleeding disorders may experience a greater degree of tooth decay. This usually occurs due to an avoidance of attending the dentist, rather than due to the bleeding disorder itself.

## How do I prevent tooth decay?

Tooth decay is preventable by:

Brushing your teeth twice daily: this should include last thing at night and one other time during the day. Brushing should be for two minutes using a toothpaste that contains fluoride. Your dental professional will assess your risk of tooth decay and may prescribe you a higher fluoride toothpaste and mouthwash for daily use. Additionally, they may apply a high fluoride varnish to your teeth for protection.

- Cutting down on sugar in your diet. Sugary snacks between meals and within an hour of going to bed increases the risk of tooth decay.
- Avoiding smoking and drinking alcohol excessively. Men and women are advised not to drink regularly more than 14 units of alcohol per week.
- It is recommended that you visit the dentist regularly. The time between visits may vary depending on your individual needs and your dental professional will advise you appropriately.

### What is gum disease and how do I know if I have it?

Gum disease is a common condition affecting the supporting structures that hold your teeth in place. It is caused by plaque.

#### Gingivitis

Plaque contains bacteria which irritate and damage the tooth's surrounding gums. The early stage of gum disease is known as gingivitis which is reversible, presenting as bad breath, swollen, red or bleeding gums. Bleeding may occur spontaneously or when brushing. In your case, bleeding may occur more often and more regularly if you have gingivitis.

## Periodontitis

Gingivitis can progress to a condition called periodontitis which is irreversible. At this stage, bone and other surrounding tooth tissues are destroyed, resulting in teeth becoming loose and eventually lost.

### I have a bleeding disorder. What should I do if my gums bleed?

Do not avoid brushing your teeth as a result.

Gum bleeding will occur as a consequence of gum disease.

This bleeding tendency may be made worse by the presence of your bleeding disorder.

A lack of brushing causes food and plaque to build up around your gums. The more plaque and food that is brushed off, on a daily basis, the healthier your gums will become and the less they will bleed in the long term.



## Will cleaning at the dentist help?

Intermittent tooth cleaning by our dental professionals may help but **will not** cure gum disease. Daily care carried out at home is the most important measure to prevent or overcome the problem.

## Do I need to take any cover from my haemophilia centre prior to teeth cleaning by my dentist?

Most patients with bleeding disorders do not need cover prior to simple teeth cleaning. However there may be exceptions depending on the condition of your gums and the severity of your bleeding disorder. Your dental professional will be able to advise you appropriately.



## Why is it so important to prevent tooth decay and gum disease?

Both conditions can result in pain, infection, poor appearance and the need for more invasive treatments at an advanced stage. The more invasive the treatment, the greater the risk of bleeding. Organising treatments such as tooth removal requires close communication with your Haemophilia centre.

While factor cover or other treatments used to prevent bleeding are usually successful, you will always be at an increased risk of bleeding and thus, avoidance of dental disease is key. Additionally, recurrent use of factor cover may make you 'resistant' to it, an important problem which we want to avoid.

## Contact Us

For further information please contact dental headquarters

Call: 01865 904040

Email: [dental.referrals@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:dental.referrals@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

# Notes

If you would like to have information translated into a different language, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team at: [EqualityandInclusion@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:EqualityandInclusion@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)

**Arabic** يُرجى الاتصال بنا إذا كنتم ترغبون في الحصول على المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بتسليق مختلف.

**Bengali** আপনি এই তথ্য অন্য ভাষায় বা আলাদা আকারে পেতে চাইলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।  
**Urdu** اگر آپ یہ معلومات دیگر زبان یا مختلف فارمیٹ میں چاہتے ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

**Chinese** 若要以其他語言或格式提供這些資訊，請與我們聯繫

**Polish** Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, skontaktuj się z nami.

**Portuguese** Queira contactar-nos se pretender as informações noutra idioma ou num formato diferente.

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