

How can I keep a healthy mouth?



Visit the dentist regularly even if your teeth look and feel fine. Let your dentist know of any medical problems you may have and give him/her an updated list of any medications you may be taking.



Brush your teeth and gums at least twice a day using a fluoride toothpaste.



Make sure you sleep with a clean mouth.



Smokers' toothpastes and whitening products may result in excessive tooth wear and eventually lead to sensitive teeth. Use with caution.

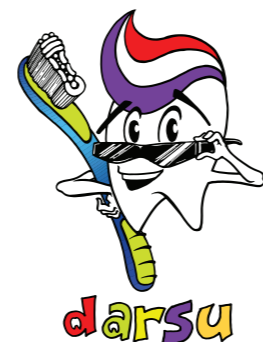


Eat healthy foods.



Contact your dentist if you notice:

- Any changes in your mouth
- Difficulty in tasting, chewing or swallowing
- Any discomfort, sores or bleeding
- Lumps and swellings



Teeth for life

Information guide for people who smoke

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Information compiled by **Dental Public Health Unit**

#teeth for life

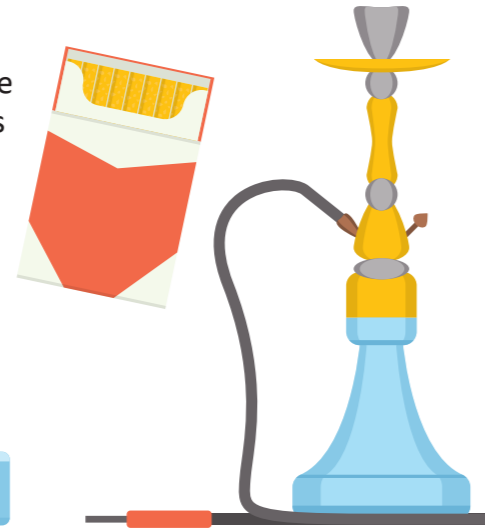
Smoking and Your Mouth



ORAL HEALTH

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Any form of **tobacco products** such as cigarettes, pipe, e cigarettes, cigarillos, cigars or if you roll your own cigarettes will cause major health problems and could lead to premature death. Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the World. In Europe 700,000 people die every year due to smoking. In Malta on average 500 deaths related to smoking can be avoided yearly.



Smoking also affects the mouth in many ways. The most common oral health problems associated with smoking are:

- Smokers' breath
- Stained teeth
- Loss of taste
- Gum disease and tooth loss
- Poor response to dental treatment and healing
- Oral cancer



A smoker's lifespan is shortened by about 11 minutes for every cigarette smoked

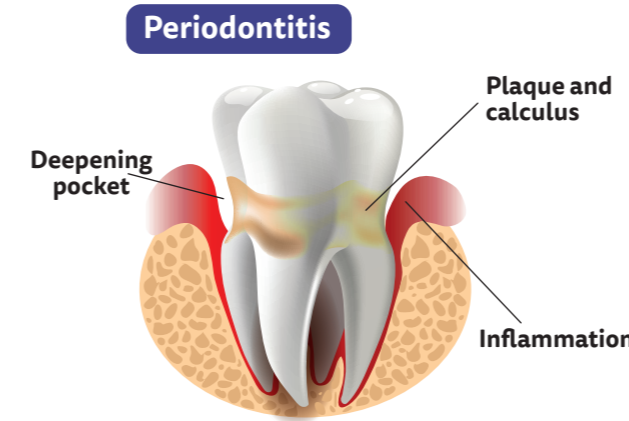
Smokeless tobacco often contains sugars to enhance flavour which increases the risk of tooth decay. It often contains sands and grit which can cause tooth wear and irritate the gum tissue causing it to recede or pull away from your teeth leading to exposed tooth roots. This increases the risk of sensitivity.

Smokers breath , stained teeth and loss of taste

Smoking stains teeth, fillings and dentures.

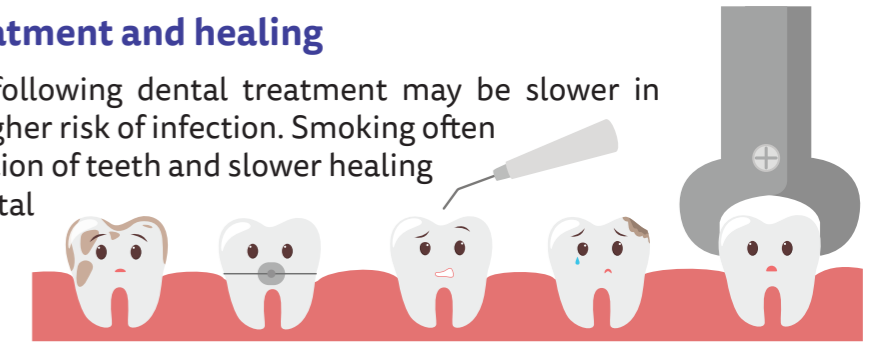
Bad breath can create serious personal and social embarrassment for smokers. Mints used to refresh one's breath may contain sugar and lead to tooth decay.

Evidence shows that people who smoke have fewer and flatter taste buds than non smokers and often complain of altered taste. Sugar and salt used in giving taste to food can be of harm to your health and teeth.



Poor response to dental treatment and healing

Evidence suggests that healing following dental treatment may be slower in smokers and they might have a higher risk of infection. Smoking often causes complications after extraction of teeth and slower healing after gum disease treatment. Dental implants are more likely to fail in smokers because of poor healing.



Oral Cancer

The incidence of oral cancers is increasing. They occur more often in people who have smoked for many years or who smoke and are heavy drinkers.

Early stages of oral cancer are not painful but often appear as small white or red patches or ulcerations that do not heal. These can be detected during mouth check-ups. Oral cancer diagnosed in the early stages may often be successfully treated, while later stages have a less favourable prognosis.



Gum disease and tooth loss

Healthy gums need good circulation. Smoking decreases the supply of blood and oxygen, causing damage to the gums and bone supporting the teeth. Smokers' gums are often thickened and may vary in colour from unusually pale to purplish in severe cases. Smokers are up to 6 times more likely to develop gum disease than non-smokers. Gum disease is the major cause of tooth loss in adults.