

# Teeth and gums

## Introduction

**You should have a check up at the dentist at least once a year.**

If your last dental check was over a year ago, or you are not sure when your last one was, book a new one.



**For most people on benefits a dental check up is free.**

- You still need to have regular check ups if you have no teeth.
- Dentists can check that gums are healthy as well as teeth.

**There is a Special Care Dentist Service in Surrey for people who need more support.**

- There are Dental Access Centres in Surrey where you can go for emergency dental care.

**Phone: 0845 271 2040**



## Looking out for dental problems people may have

**Some people with a learning disability can't say that they have a problem with their teeth or are in pain. It may be that their behaviour changes.**



It is important to understand that a person's behaviour may change because of a physical health problem they have.

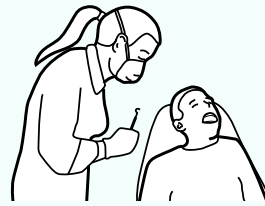
It is important to check whether people are prone to chest infections. If bacteria build up in their mouth as a result of poor dental care these can be breathed in and cause chest infections.

**There are lots of useful resources in the 'Going to the Dentist' section of our website [www.surreyhealthaction.org](http://www.surreyhealthaction.org)**

# Things to check with the person you support

## When did you last have a dental check up?

- Are you registered with a dentist?
- Do you have an appointment booked? When is it?



## Are you worried or frightened about going to the dentist?

- Are you worried about going to the dentist?
- What support will help you with this?



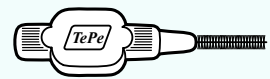
## Do you need help to clean your teeth and gums?

- Do you get the help you need?
- Do you brush your teeth twice a day for 2 minutes?
- If you have no teeth you should brush your gums with a soft toothbrush and toothpaste.



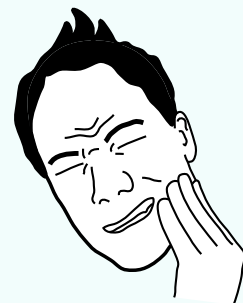
## Do you have the right toothbrush?

- Dentists can recommend a range of special toothbrushes for you to use.



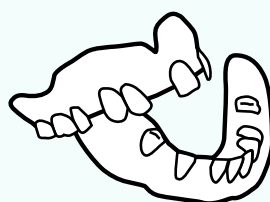
## Do you have problems with your teeth and gums?

- Do you have any sores or mouth ulcers?
- Do your gums bleed when you brush your teeth?
- Do your teeth or mouth hurt when you are eating or drinking?
- Does your breath smell?
- Do you get mouth ulcers?



## Do you have dentures?

- Do you wear them?
- Are they in good condition?
- Do they fit well and feel OK to wear?



# Your notes from doing the checklist

**Important** - if you or the people who support you have any concerns about your health, it is important to make an appointment to see your GP or dentist

## Agreeing Health Actions

You can agree Health Actions after doing the checklist. An example would be:  
'To make an appointment with the Dentist Surgery for a check up.'

In the 'Health Action Planning Made Easy' section of:  
[www.surreyhealthaction.org](http://www.surreyhealthaction.org) - there are templates you can use.

