

What can I do to keep my teeth and gums healthy every day?

- To keep teeth healthy, limit how often you take sugary foods and drinks, **especially between meals.**
- Brush your teeth and gums twice a day using a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.
- Spit out toothpaste – do not rinse.
- Don't let children under 2 years use fluoride toothpaste unless your local dental team advises it.
- Choose a toothbrush with a small head and soft or medium bristles.
- Remove any dentures at night to give the mouth a rest. Store dentures in cold water when not being worn.
- Quit smoking – it can cause gum disease, bad breath and even mouth cancer.
- Request sugar-free medicine from your doctor, dentist and chemist.
- Visit your dentist regularly, as often as they recommend.
- Please keep dental appointments.

A healthy mouth helps you eat, speak clearly and look and feel good!



HE Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Plain English
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Special Care Dentistry

**Dental Services for People
who need Additional Support**



What is special care dentistry?

This is a type of dentistry that offers treatment to people unable to receive routine care. These include people who have:

- physical disabilities,
- hearing or sight loss,
- intellectual disability,
- emotional or mental difficulties,
- a serious or long-term illness, and/or
- difficulty using social services.

Who can provide this type of dental treatment?

Everyone should be able to access dental care. Your own local dentist may be able to meet all your needs. We encourage dentists to treat people with disabilities as part of their general service.

- **Dentists taking part in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS)**
The DTSS allows you to receive free dental treatment once you have an up-to-date medical card. You can get a list of dentists who take part in this scheme at your local health centre. Those who take part can provide a wide range of dental treatments for people aged 16 and over.

- **Local HSE dental clinics**
Dentists at local HSE clinics may offer treatment. HSE dentists also carry out screenings in special national schools, various training centres, day care centres and residential units. Contact your local HSE dental clinic for information about these services. You can get details of your local clinic in the phone book or on the HSE website, www.hse.ie.

Some dentists may not have the facilities to meet all your needs. Contact your local dentist or nearest HSE clinic to check what services are available before you make or attend for your appointment.

- **Dublin Dental Hospital (DDH)**
You may be able to receive special care dentistry in the Dublin Dental Hospital, but first you will usually need a referral letter from your regular dentist or a HSE dentist.

What treatments can I get?

You can get routine treatments such as teeth cleaning, fillings and extractions if your dentist says you need them.

Your dentist may need to check with the HSE dental service before you can get some treatment on the DTSS, for example dentures (false teeth).

- **Sedation or general anaesthetic**
Some patients may need to be sedated (calmed through tablets or other medication) or receive a general anaesthetic for certain treatments. These options are usually available only when you have a referral letter from a general dentist or a HSE dentist. You will usually need to go on a waiting list and some areas may not be able to provide these options.

What does the dentist need to know?

Before treating you, the dentist needs to know:

- your medical history, including any recent operations and allergies you may have,
- what medicines you are taking, including any inhalers and medicines prescribed regularly by your doctor and
- the name of your family doctor and hospital consultant.

Is there an emergency dental service for people needing special care dentistry?

Yes, you can get emergency treatment in your local HSE dental clinic or from a general dentist who is taking part in the DTSS. Please contact these services for the emergency times.