

# Oral Health Promotion Newsletter

## Camden & Islington Adult Services May 2021



**NATIONAL SMILE MONTH**  
17 MAY - 17 JUNE 2021

What makes you  
**SMILE?**

Smile  
Smile  
Smile

Inside this issue:

- Covid-19 Service update on Oral Health Promotion and Community Dental Services
- National Smile Month
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Alcohol and oral health conditions
- Carer's Week
- Facts about Mouth Cancer
- Covid-19 and oral health
- Tops tips for oral health

Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the adult branch of the Camden and Islington Oral Health Promotion Newsletter!

Last year we all went through a very difficult period due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Although we are not yet completely in the clear, with gradual relaxation of some of the lockdown measures we can start enjoying some sort of normality at least in certain aspects of our lives which is very well deserved!

As you know May is this time of the year when we celebrate Smile Month which runs from 17<sup>th</sup> May to 17<sup>th</sup> June. It is the largest and longest-running oral health awareness campaign. This year this campaign starts immediately after the end of the mental health awareness week which runs from 10<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> May. Both campaigns are very important and have a significant impact on an individual's quality of life and general well-being.

In this Newsletter, we will give you more information on how you can take an active part in promoting Smile Month and Mental Health Awareness Week. There will also be loads of oral health news and updates especially for our Camden and Islington partners.

We hope that you enjoy reading this Newsletter!

## **Community Dental Services**

Regular dental services (General Dental services/high street dentists) and Community Dental Services reopened after the first lockdown in June. As expected, most services had a backlog of appointments and new protocols in place which led to longer waiting times for people to get an appointment.

In addition to that some patients were anxious about attending dental services in a pandemic.

It is important to rest assured that dental clinics are following national guidelines on providing the best patient care possible prioritising the health and safety of both patients and dental health professionals.

## **Referrals for new patients**

The Whittington Health Community Dental Service is a referral dental service for vulnerable patient groups who cannot access high street general dental practices. This group would include patients with learning disabilities, dementia, mental health issues, homelessness, alcohol and substance misuse, complex medical needs, bariatric, housebound patients etc.

Referrals can be made by GPs, general dentists or staff in health and social care.

Further information and referral forms can be accessed at the Whittington Health Dental Services website

<https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/default.asp?c=10989>

Please use the form titled Special Care Dentistry Referral Form (Non Dentist) and send to the following email: [dentalreferral.whitthealth@nhs.net](mailto:dentalreferral.whitthealth@nhs.net)

**The Community Dental Clinics in Camden & Islington are at the following health centres:**

### **Camden**

- **Belsize Priory Health Centre**  
208 Belsize Road  
NW6 4DS
- **Crowndale Health Centre**  
59, Crowndale Road  
NW1 1TN
- **Gospel Oak Health Centre**  
5 Lismore Circus  
NW5 4QF
- **Kentish Town Health Centre**  
2 Bartholomew Road  
NW5 2BX

### **Islington**

- **Holloway Health Centre**  
11 Hornsey Street  
N7 8GG
- **Hornsey Rise Health Centre**  
Beaumont Rise  
N19 3YU
- **Finsbury Health Centre**  
17 Pine Street  
EC1R 0LP

Alternatively, information about general dental services, "high street dentists" can be accessed on the NHS services website <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search>

## **Urgent Dental Care**

If you are an existing patient of Whittington Health Dental Service and have an urgent dental problem then you should contact the service in the usual way for dental advice on: 020 3316 8353.

If you are not a patient of Whittington Health Dental Service and need urgent dental treatment, you are advised to:

- Contact your own dentist for advice.
- If you do not have a dentist, and can't speak to one for advice, then you should call NHS111

## **Dental costs**

There are frequent queries regarding exemption for NHS dental charges, especially for service users in hostel, homeless and refugee accommodation.

For information on NHS dental charges and understanding charges and bands, use the following links:

[NHS dental charges poster](#)

[Understanding NHS Dental Charges](#)

Information on dental costs exemption can be found in detail on the following website "Who is entitled to free NHS dental treatment in England". The link is [here](#)

## **OHP Team update**

As most of you already know, we have had some changes in the OHP team at the beginning of this year. Farheen Naqvi who was the OHP lead for Islington adult services has now moved on to a new position in the same OHP team. Farheen spent 4 years in this position and did a fantastic job with the care homes and social exclusion services. A big thank you to Farheen and we wish her all the best in her new role.

Jean-Mary Richemond who was covering Camden services is now the OHP lead for both Camden and Islington adult services. Please contact Jean-Mary directly via [jean.richemond@nhs.net](mailto:jean.richemond@nhs.net) for all adult oral health promotion queries.

## **National Smile Month**

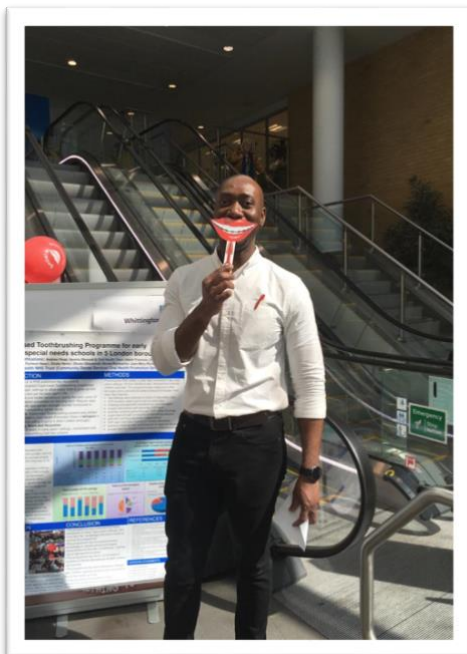
As mentioned at the start of this newsletter, the National Smile Month is the longest running oral health campaign in the UK that runs from 17<sup>th</sup> May to 17<sup>th</sup> June. The main aim is primarily to put a smile on everyone's face promoting good oral health and raising awareness around important health issues.

Maintaining a healthy smile can be simple but for so many this can be very difficult. Despite the many improvements in oral health over the last 40 years, inequalities continue to be a burden for countless individuals.

During National Smile Month, we are promoting four key messages for better oral health:

- Brush teeth for two minutes, last thing at night and one other time during the day, with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between your teeth every day.
- Cut down how much and how often you have sugary foods and drinks.
- Visit a dentist regularly.

No matter how you decide to support the campaign, please make sure you participate in communicating and sharing the important messages above.





## **Mental Health Awareness Week**

Mental Health Awareness Week is an annual event that gives the whole of the UK the opportunity to focus on achieving good mental health. The Mental Health Foundation started the event 21 years ago. Each year the Foundation continues to set the theme, organise and host the week. This has now grown to become a very big awareness week in the UK and around the World.

Mental Health Awareness Week is open to everyone especially those who are affected by mental health issues. It is all about starting conversations about mental health and the things in our daily lives that can affect it. This year the theme of the event is connection with nature and as such, individuals, communities and governments are invited to think about ways to connect with nature and how nature can improve our mental health.

However, the week is also a chance for people to talk about any aspect of mental health they want to – regardless of the theme and to put a particular focus on providing help and advice to those in need.

To support this campaign, we organised an oral health education session for carers and service users at the Camden and Islington mental health homes on 15<sup>th</sup> May. During this training we raised awareness on the oral health issues related to mental health, discussed how poor oral health is linked to general health and wellbeing and provided advice for service users to achieve better oral health.

At the time of publication of this newsletter the Mental Health Awareness Week event would have already ended. However, people who participated in that event were invited to notice and appreciate nature and try to make a habit of connecting to the nature every day. They were also encouraged to stop to listen to the birdsong, smell the freshly cut grass, take care of a house plant, notice any trees, flowers or animals nearby. You can also take a moment in your own time to appreciate these connections.

You can access a short YouTube video by the Mental Health organisation regarding this event [here](#)



## **Alcohol and oral health conditions**

Most of us are now aware that drinking alcohol too much too often is bad for our health. It can cause many medical problems and, in some cases, fatal diseases. However, many of us do not realise the damage that alcohol does to our mouth, gums and teeth. Drinking alcohol too often can lead to tooth staining, gum disease, tooth loss and in more severe cases, mouth cancer. Here is a list of the potential problems which alcohol can have on the health of our mouth.

### **Tooth decay**

Alcohol drinks are high in sugar and acid. Regularly drinking more than 14 units a week can lead to an increased risk of tooth decay and also has an effect on how likely we are to care for our mouth. Failing to brush our teeth regularly, especially last thing at night can result in tooth decay and gum disease.

### **Dental erosion**

Alcohol can also cause dental erosion which is the loss of tooth enamel that protects the sensitive dentine underneath the enamel. Fizzy, wine and other acidic drinks are also likely to cause damage.

### **Excessive bleeding**

Heavy alcohol use can result in excessive bleeding of the gum or even blood blisters inside the mouth.

### **Effectiveness of medication**

If you need dental treatment that requires local anesthetics or other drugs, they could have a reduced effect.

### **Gum (Periodontal) disease**

Those who drink alcohol are at greater risk of gum disease and inflammation of the gum

### **Mouth Cancer**

Drinking too much alcohol too often is a major risk factor linked with mouth cancer - associated with around a third of cases. Those who smoke and drink alcohol increase their risk of mouth cancer by up to 30 times.

### **Delayed healing following oral surgery**

Drinking excessive amount of alcohol can severely slow down the time which we heal and recover. This is because alcohol irritates the tissue inside the mouth.

### **Dry mouth**

Dry mouth can lead to difficulty swallowing and tongue irritation. A lack of saliva can lead to plaque, gum disease, tooth decay and tooth loss.

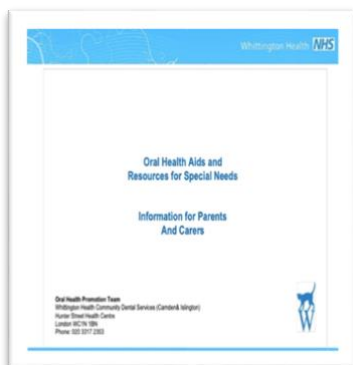
If you notice any change inside the mouth of a resident, please contact a dentist or fill out the referral form and send it to [dentalreferral.whitthealth@nhs.net](mailto:dentalreferral.whitthealth@nhs.net)



## Oral Health Promotion at Carers Week Event 2021

Carers Week is a national initiative which highlights the importance of unpaid carers, the challenges that they face and recognition of the contribution that they make to families and their communities. To keep supporting all the carers in Camden and Islington, the Oral Health Promotion Team, as usual will hold a virtual stall at the Age UK Carer's Right Day Event. Some of our information leaflets developed especially for carers and service users will be displayed and we will also be available online to provide information and answer all your questions regarding oral health. You will also have the opportunity to access and download this newsletter and other information resources such as

- Oral health aids and Resources which is a booklet that has a list of available items that could be used to make twice daily tooth brushing easier and more comfortable for both carers and the vulnerable individuals.
- Helping with tooth brushing for dementia patients: That gives you techniques and tips on how to help people with dementia achieving better oral care
- Denture care leaflet: Where you will find information on how to remove complete and partial dentures from the patient's mouth and properly clean dentures.



Information about the Islington Carer's Rights Day Event can be accessed [here](#)



Facts about...

# Mouth Cancer

- **1 person every 3 HOURS is lost to Mouth cancer**
- **Over 8700 new cases in the UK each year**
- **Each year 2700 + lives are lost to Mouth Cancer**
- **Worldwide Mouth Cancer affects 650,000 per year**
- **Mouth Cancer is TWICE as common in men**
- **78% of cases occur in the Over 55 age group**
- **Incidence has risen by 49% over the past 10 years**

## **The 2-minute do it yourself self-examination that could save your life!**

All you need is a mirror, a good light source, and clean fingers.

1. **FACE** - Look for swellings you have not noticed before and inspect your skin. Turn your head from side to side, stretching the skin over the muscles making lumps easier to see.
2. **NECK** - Run your fingers under your jaw and feel either side of your neck. Are there any swellings?
3. **LIPS** - Pull your upper lip upwards and bottom lip downwards. Look inside for any sores or changes in colour.
4. **GUMS** - Examine your gums feeling around the gum for anything unusual.
5. **CHEEKS** - Open your mouth and pull your cheek away one side at a time. Look for any red or white patches. Check for ulcers, lumps or tenderness.
6. **TONGUE** - Gently pull out your tongue and examine one side then the other. Look for swellings, ulcers or changes in colour. Examine the underside of your tongue.
7. **FLOOR AND ROOF OF MOUTH** - Tilt your head back and open your mouth. Then lift your tongue up and look at the floor of the mouth. Observing changes in colour, ulcers or swellings.





## **Oral health and Covid-19 – latest news**

According to a new study cited on the Oral Health Foundation website, people with severe gum disease are more likely to develop more serious complications from the Covid-19 infection. Those complications could include hospitalisation, being put on a ventilator or even die from the infection.

During the research they examined over 500 patients and found that those with severe gum disease were more likely to die from Covid-19 in comparison to those who did not have severe gum disease. It also found that patients with severe gum disease were nearly five times more likely to need assisted ventilation.

Coronavirus has already infected over 4 million people from the UK. It is estimated that 90% of adults in the UK has some form of gum disease. According to the Oral Health Foundation, gum disease can be easily prevented, or managed in its early stages.

Dr Nigel Carter OBE, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation charity believes keeping on top of your oral health could play a key role in battling the virus.

Dr Carter says: "This is the latest of many studies that form a connection between the mouth and other health conditions. The evidence here seems overwhelming – by maintaining good oral health, specifically healthy gums – you are able to limit your chances of developing the most serious complications of coronavirus.

"If left untreated, gum disease can lead to abscesses, and over several years, the bone supporting the teeth can be lost," adds Dr Carter. "When gum disease becomes advanced, treatment becomes more difficult. Given the new link with coronavirus complications, the need for early intervention becomes even greater.

The first sign of gum disease is blood on your toothbrush or in the toothpaste you spit out after brushing. Your gums may also bleed when you are eating, leaving a bad taste in your mouth. Your breath may also become unpleasant.

The Whittington Community Dental Services is keen to highlight the importance of taking early action against the signs of gum disease, following research that suggests far too many people ignore it.

If you notice that your resident's teeth bleed while performing tooth brushing, please continue to clean their teeth and brush across gumline. Removing the plaque and tartar from around teeth is vital for managing and preventing gum disease. The most effective way to keep gum disease at bay is to brush teeth with a fluoride toothpaste for two minutes twice a day and to also clean in between your teeth with interdental brushes or floss daily. You may also find that getting a specialised mouthwash will help

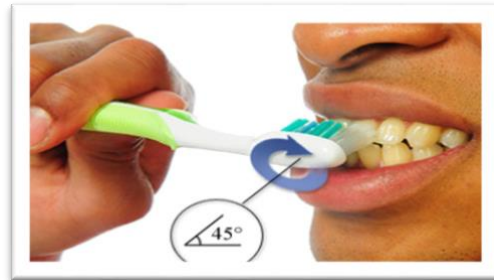
For more information about gum disease, or if you are concerned about your resident's oral health, please contact your oral health promoter via [jean.richmond@nhs.net](mailto:jean.richmond@nhs.net) or call the CDS head office on 02033162353 to book an appointment.

## **Oral health care tips**

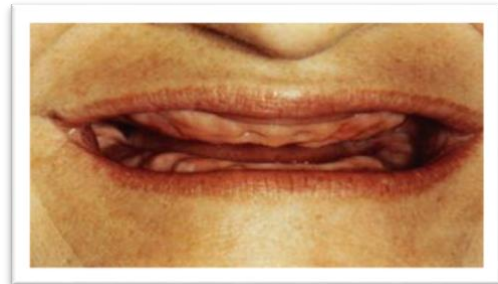
### **Brush teeth twice a day**

Use a fluoride toothpaste (1450 ppm) or high fluoride if prescribed once during the day and last thing at night.

Brush for at least **2 minutes** ensuring all teeth and all surfaces are cleaned using small circular movements; make sure to gently brush the gum line as well. (The point where the tooth and gums meet)



If **dentures** are worn, they must be removed in the night and cleaned thoroughly and also rinsed after meals during the day.



If there are no teeth in the mouth, the **gums** and rest of the mouth should be cleaned gently using a soft bristled toothbrush.

### **Spit, don't rinse**

After brushing, spit out the remaining toothpaste from the mouth, but do not rinse to allow the fluoride in the toothpaste to give the enamel more protection by building mineral content.



### **Cut down on sugars**

Cut down the amount and frequency of consuming sugary foods and drinks. Preferably limit to meal times and choose healthy snack options for in-between meals like cheese, fruit etc.

### **Regular dental checks**

This will help maintain good oral health and treat any problems early on even if there are few or no teeth and dentures. The dentist will advise how often to visit.

**For more information, contact Camden & Islington's Oral  
Health Promoter:**

**Jean-Mary Richemond**

**Community Dental Services Whittington Health**

**Crowndale Health Centre**

**London NW1 1TN**

**Email: [jean.richemond@nhs.net](mailto:jean.richemond@nhs.net)**