

Check up

What is a dental checkup and how will it help me?

A dental checkup is where your dental practitioner (that is your dentist, oral health therapist or dental therapist) looks at your teeth, gums, lips, tongue and saliva to see if they are healthy.

Why have a dental checkup?

A dental checkup is to look at the health of your mouth, find any problems and discuss possible treatments. Steps to help minimise further problems can also be explained. Good oral health is important to general health and wellbeing. Better oral health can lead to better general health.

What happens at a dental checkup?

During a dental checkup your dental practitioner will assess and record information relating to your general and dental health.

This may include:

- A complete medical and dental history, including current medications, allergies and previous treatments and conditions
- Checking the mouth for tooth decay, bleeding, and how the teeth fit together
- X-rays may be taken to help find such things as tooth decay, infections, tumours, teeth that have not come through the gums and damage to jaw bones
- Preventive care: this may involve the use of fluoride, polishing of fillings, cleaning of teeth and advice on how

to care for your teeth and gums. Dental practitioners (oral health staff) include dentists, dental specialists, oral health therapists and dental therapists. Sometimes dental students may also do your dental checkup.

What is a treatment plan?

A treatment plan, if required following your check up, will provide information about your treatment options, the benefits and risks of any treatment and information relating to care after treatment. You are invited to ask questions about your dental health, treatment needs and to be involved in developing your treatment plan.

What are the specific risks of a dental checkup?

There are no common risks associated with a dental checkup.

Why do people keep asking me for my name?

Each time you arrive for a dental appointment, you will be asked your:

- Full Name
- Date of Birth (D.O.B.)
- Why you are attending?

The staff will know who you are and that you are attending your dental checkup. Asking these questions is a way they make sure they have everything right, such as the right person for the right appointment. Answering these questions for some young children may be difficult. Therefore, a parent/guardian may be asked to attend the checkup.

How can I help look after my teeth?

- Drink plenty of tap water.
- Limit sugary foods and drink.

- Choose healthy snacks (e.g. fruit and vegetables).
- Brush teeth and along the gum line twice a day with a soft brush.
- Brush thoroughly for two to three minutes.
- Use a fluoride toothpaste as recommended by your dental practitioner. Spit out excess toothpaste after brushing but do not rinse.
- Clean between the teeth daily with floss or interdental brushes.
- Speak with your dental practitioner about whether fluoride mouth rinsing is appropriate for you.
- Chew sugar-free gum to increase saliva flow.
- Quit smoking to improve oral and general health (Quitline phone: 13 78 48).
- Wear a mouthguard for all sports where there is a risk of mouth injury.
- Talk with your dental practitioner about how often you need a dental checkup.
- Visit your dental practitioner if you have:
 - toothache
 - bleeding gums
 - discoloured teeth
 - overcrowded teeth:

Questions to ask my dental practitioner.

Please ask your dental practitioner if you do not understand any aspect of the information in this patient information sheet or any other information you have been given about your condition, treatment options and proposed procedure.