

Most people are now aware that smoking is bad for their health. It can cause many medical problems but also dental problems.

Smoking can stain teeth, lead to gum disease and most severely mouth cancer.

The nicotine and tar content of cigarettes can lead to tooth staining. It can make teeth appear very yellow.

Smoking can also lead to gum disease. People who smoke are more likely to produce bacterial plaque, which leads to gum disease. Smoking causes lack of oxygen in the bloodstream, so infected gums do not heal properly. Smoking causes gum disease to progress more rapidly than in non-smokers. Gum disease is the most common cause of tooth loss in adults.

Most people know that smoking can cause lung cancer and throat cancer; smoking can lead to mouth cancer too. Every year thousands of people die from mouth cancer brought on by smoking.

It is very important that you visit your dentist regularly. Your dental surgeon will check your teeth and gums but

also check your cheeks, tongue and throat. Any developing conditions may therefore be spotted early and investigated further.

There are special toothpastes for people who smoke. They can be more abrasive than regular toothpaste and care should be taken in their use. Your dentist should be able to advise you. There are also whitening toothpastes on the market. They do not change the colour of your teeth, but they may help to reduce staining. Again ask your dentist for advice.

People who smoke may find they are more likely to have bad breath than non-smokers. Fresh breath products such as mouthwashes may help to disguise the problem in the short term, but will only mask it.

Staining can often be removed from your teeth by your dental surgeon or dental hygienist.



They can scale and polish your teeth and also use a bicarbonate of soda jet.



They can also offer oral hygiene advice to ensure that you are removing plaque from your teeth efficiently.

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**SMOKING AND
ORAL HEALTH**

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