



This patient information sheet answers frequently asked questions about a dental checkup. It has been developed to be used in discussion with your dental practitioner.

1. 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.

2. Why have a dental checkup?

A dental checkup is important 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. What are the specific risks of a dental checkup?

There are no common risks associated with a dental checkup.

6. 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
- 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.

7. 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).



Image 1: Magnifying glass over a tooth



Image 2: Glass of water



7. How can I help look after my teeth? *(continued)*

- 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.



Image 3: Tooth holding toothbrush

8. Useful sources of information

Read about mouth care for yourself, babies, infants and children, and teenagers, emergencies and accidents, mouthguards, water fluoridation, and available dental services on the Queensland Health Oral Health website: www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth

The Queensland Health Informed Consent website:

www.health.qld.gov.au/consent has information on various dental procedures.



Image 6: No smoking symbol

To quit smoking:

- talk to your dental practitioner, GP, pharmacist, or community health worker
- call Quitline: 13 QUIT (13 78 48)
- refer to the Queensland Government website:

www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/atods/smoking/index.html



Image 5: Website address symbol

9. 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.

10. Contacts

To find a public local dental clinic, search the Queensland Health Oral Health website “Contact Us” section for a dental service list. The website is: www.health.qld.gov.au/oralhealth/contact_us.asp



Image 7: Ringing phone symbol

A private dental practitioner (who you may need to pay) may be found on the Australian Dental Association website using the “Find a Dentist” tool. The website is: www.ada.org.au/Find-a-Dentist
Outside of dental clinic/service hours:

- if advice is required, call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84). 13HEALTH provides confidential health advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- if an emergency, call 000.

Your local contact details are:

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