

Smoking and dental care

Information for patients

This leaflet explains how smoking affects your teeth and gums. If you have any queries or concerns, do not hesitate to contact one of the dentists caring for you.

Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name and date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.
Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

How can smoking affect my oral health?

Smoking can lead to stained teeth, gum disease, tooth loss and, more seriously, mouth cancer.

Why do teeth become stained?

One of the effects of smoking is stained teeth. The nicotine and tar in tobacco can make the teeth yellow very quickly, and heavy smokers often notice that their teeth are almost brown after just a few years of smoking.

How will smoking affect my gums and teeth?

People who smoke are more likely to have gum disease. Gum disease is the most common cause of tooth loss in adults.

Smoking may increase the amount of harmful bacteria in dental plaque and reduce the blood flow in the gums and tissues that support the teeth. This makes them more likely to become inflamed.

How is smoking linked with cancer?

As well as many other cancers (lung and throat cancer), smoking is the major cause of mouth (oral) cancer. Your risk is further increased if you drink alcohol.

How often should I visit my dentist?

It is important that you visit your dentist regularly (you may need to go more often than non-smokers) as people who smoke are more likely to have stained teeth and gum disease. The dentist will do a normal check-up and a thorough mouth examination so that any problems can be spotted early.

They may also be able to put you in touch with organisations that can help you stop smoking.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. The PALS office is located at King's College Hospital, Camberwell on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: kch-tr.PALS@nhs.net

You can also contact us by using our online form at www.kch.nhs.uk/contact/pals

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact PALS on 020 3299 1844.