



### CONSULTATION TIPS

- Gather information using the **WWHAM (Who? What? How? Action? Medicines?)** questioning approach;
- Avoid the scripted nature of these questions by talking to the patient and including them in the conversation. Repeat back your understanding for confirmation;
- Listen carefully to the patient — they will often provide you with answers to some of the questions before you ask them.

### ADVICE FOR MAINTAINING ORAL HYGIENE

- Brush twice daily, using small circular motions, ensuring coverage of all surfaces of the teeth and where teeth meet the gums. It is important to also brush the tongue;
- Use a toothpaste with at least 1,450ppm of fluoride for children aged 3+ and adults;
- Spit out after brushing and do not rinse, to maintain fluoride concentration;
- Dentures should be cleaned daily and not worn overnight;
- Use interdental aids daily (e.g. interdental brushes or floss) to clean in-between teeth.

For detailed information see:  
<http://bit.ly/PJDental1>

# Managing dental emergencies in response to COVID-19

## The current situation

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all dental surgeries are now closed and the provision of all routine, non-urgent dental care has been stopped until further notice.

As a result, patients may present more frequently to community pharmacy with their dental problems.

## Access to urgent dental care

Patients should be advised that urgent dental care services have been established across the UK and that **initial access to remote primary care dental triage and assessment is via two paths:**

- **By contacting their own dentist and/or local health board if they are registered with a dental practice; or**
- **By contacting NHS 111 if they are not registered with a practice.**

Following remote assessment, a decision will be made as per local protocols on whether a referral or access to urgent dental care is required.

## Dental emergencies and pharmacy

The summary of self-care advice and important considerations (see overleaf) can be used by pharmacy teams to counsel patients on interim management for the following dental problems:



Toothache



Fractured or chipped tooth



Lost fillings or crowns



Mouth ulcers



Bleeding or sore gums



Sensitive teeth



Teething

# Dental emergencies: interim self-care and management advice through pharmacy



## TOOTHACHE

<http://bit.ly/PJDental2>

### MANAGEMENT ADVICE

- Provide analgesia (paracetamol and ibuprofen) if required;
- Implement a soft diet and avoid pain triggers (e.g. hot or cold drinks and food);
- If sensitive, recommend desensitising toothpaste and soft toothbrush;
- For cuts or abrasions in the mouth, recommend chlorhexidine mouthwash, saltwater or anaesthetic mouthwashes/gels to prevent infection and aid oral hygiene (see advice overleaf);
- A chipped tooth may be sealed using a temporary filling kit.

### CAUTIONS AND WHEN TO REFER

- If caused by trauma, enquire if patient has experienced any vomiting or loss of consciousness. If yes, the patient should urgently attend A&E;
- If mild trauma and patient can self-manage their condition, advise that if pain becomes severe and uncontrollable, preventing sleeping or eating, they will need to seek urgent dental care services.



## FRACTURED OR CHIPPED TOOTH

<http://bit.ly/PJDental2>

- Provide analgesia (paracetamol and ibuprofen) if required;
- Implement a soft diet and avoid pain triggers (e.g. hot or cold drinks and food);
- If sensitive, recommend desensitising toothpaste and soft toothbrush;
- For cuts or abrasions in the mouth, recommend chlorhexidine mouthwash, saltwater or anaesthetic mouthwashes/gels to prevent infection and aid oral hygiene (see advice overleaf);
- A chipped tooth may be sealed using a temporary filling kit.

- If caused by trauma, enquire if patient has experienced any vomiting or loss of consciousness. If yes, the patient should urgently attend A&E;
- If mild trauma and patient can self-manage their condition, advise that if pain becomes severe and uncontrollable, preventing sleeping or eating, they will need to seek urgent dental care services.



## LOST FILLINGS OR CROWN

<http://bit.ly/PJDental2>

- Provide analgesia (paracetamol and ibuprofen) if required;
- The crown (if stable) can be re-cemented with a temporary crown cement kit or the remaining tooth sealed with a temporary filling kit;
- If sensitive, recommend the use of a desensitising toothpaste and soft toothbrush.

- Owing to risk of pain, swelling and infection, advise patient to seek urgent dental care services immediately.



## MOUTH ULCERS

<http://bit.ly/PJDental3>

- Emphasise oral hygiene advice alongside the use of mouthwashes (e.g. chlorhexidine during and two days after healing has occurred);
- Local pain relief using topical gels (e.g. benzydamine hydrochloride);
- Avoiding pain triggers (e.g. spicy foods and smoking).

- Urgent dental assessment is required for any non-healing, non-painful ulcer present for two weeks or more, that has no obvious repeat trauma to the area;
- Patients with regular mouth ulcers should be referred to their GP for investigation.



## BLEEDING OR SORE GUMS

<http://bit.ly/PJDental4>

- Emphasise oral hygiene advice (see overleaf);
- If bleeding is frequent and there is a bad taste or bad smell, rinse with a chlorhexidine mouthwash (not for children <7 years);
- Smoking contributes to gum disease, so recommend smoking cessation if appropriate.

- Gums can bleed more if pregnant or diabetic;
- Recommend seeking dental advice for elimination of other causes especially if concurrent fever or ulceration.



## SENSITIVE TEETH

<http://bit.ly/PJDental2>

- Short, sharp pain can be triggered by hot, cold, sweet or acidic foods. Recommend desensitising toothpaste to temporarily relieve pain and avoidance of triggers;
- Provide oral hygiene advice (see box overleaf).

- If symptoms are persistent and cannot be self-managed, recommend seeking dental advice for elimination of other causes.



## TEETHING

<http://bit.ly/PJDental5>

- Teething begins around age 6 months (varies between 3 months and 12 months of age). Adult teeth begin to erupt around the age of 6 years;
- Explain that symptoms related to teething are self-limiting;
- As children can experience pain in the mouth during teething, affecting sleeping and eating;
- Ensure the child is adequately hydrated;
- Sugar free liquid paracetamol or ibuprofen can relieve pain and pyrexia;
- Pureed food, cool liquids and teething aids can be helpful, but regular pureed sweet food (e.g. fruit purees) can lead to tooth decay.

- Be aware of the risk of serious illness in children with fever refer to NICE Guideline CG160;
- If you have any concerns as to the child's general health, contact GP or NHS 111.

**Sources:** NHS Health Education England. Managing dental and oral presentations in community pharmacy. Available at: <https://penc.org.uk/communitypharmacys/wp-content/uploads/sites/121/2017/11/Pharmacy-Dental-Fact-Sheets-Final-290917.pdf> (accessed May 2020); Public Health England. Delivering better oral health toolkit. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence-based-toolkit-for-prevention> (accessed May 2020); National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. Oral health promotion in general dental practice. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng30> (accessed May 2020); Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme. Guidance prevention and management of dental decay in children. Available at: <https://www.scottishdental.org/sdoep-prevention-and-management-of-dental-caries-in-children-2nd-ed> (accessed May 2020); Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme. Management of acute dental problems during COVID-19 pandemic. Available at: <http://www.sdoep.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/SDCEP-MADP-COVID-19-guide-300320.pdf> (accessed May 2020); National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Guideline CG160. Fever in under 5s: assessment and initial management. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg160> (accessed May 2020)

### Product Information

**Corsodyl 0.2% Mouthwash (Alcohol Free).** Active Ingredient: Chlorhexidine digluconate **Indications:** Plaque inhibition; gingivitis; maintenance of oral hygiene; post periodontal surgery or treatment; aphthous ulceration; oral candida. **Legal category:** GSL. **Licence Holder:** GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare, Brentford, TW8 9GS, UK. Information about this product, including adverse reactions, precautions, contra-indications and method of use can be found at: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/23034> **Trade marks are owned by or licensed to the GSK group of companies.**