

# Tips for managing dental problems at home during Covid-19 pandemic

**Guidance:** NHS England and the Department of Health have instructed dental practices to stop face-face routine dental care during the pandemic period to reduce the risk of virus transmission and prioritise urgent dental problems by telephone advice only where possible. The following guidance is to support you in helping managing minor symptoms at home. Please do **call us** though if you have a problem and want advice or guidance.



**Accessing dental care:** If you have an urgent dental problem, there are **local Urgent Dental Care Centres** being set up to enable treatment to be undertaken should you need it. Please call us and we will advise you.

## What is a dental emergency?



- **Facial swelling** extending to eye, neck or floor of the mouth
- **Bleeding** following an extraction that does not stop after 20 mins of solid pressure with a gauze/clean hankie. A small amount or taste of blood is normal, just like if you had grazed your knee.
- Bleeding due to **trauma**.
- Severely **broken tooth causing severe pain**
- **Tooth fallen out** from trauma
- **Significant toothache** that is preventing sleep, stopping eating combined with swelling or fever that is not manageable with pain killers.



**Please call the practice**

if you have a dental emergency or need advice

## Non-Urgent Dental Problem (may have to wait until practice re-opens)



- Loose or lost crowns, bridges or veneers.
- Broken, rubbing or loose dentures.
- Bleeding gums
- Broken, loose or lost fillings.
- Chipped teeth with no pain.
- Loose orthodontic wires.
- Lost invisalign button
- Broken brace or retainer problem

## Go straight to A & E if:

- Facial swelling affecting your vision, breathing, ability to take in fluids or preventing your mouth opening more than 2 fingers width.
- Trauma causing loss of consciousness, double vision or vomiting

## What if I am in the middle of treatment?

We know it is not ideal at the moment, but we must follow the strict guidance we have been given.

We ask anyone who is in the middle of treatment to call or email us to discuss their case individually

## How Get in touch



**01932 8586868**



**[yasmin@confident smiles.org](mailto:yasmin@confident smiles.org)**

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## Tooth Sensitivity

If you have sensitivity to hot/cold food or drink that goes away quickly – **desensitising toothpastes** can help.

Rub toothpaste directly on the affected area topically like a cream and don't rinse afterwards.

Do this particularly around the tooth at night time to give it longer to work

*There are many toothpastes on the market for sensitivity such as:*

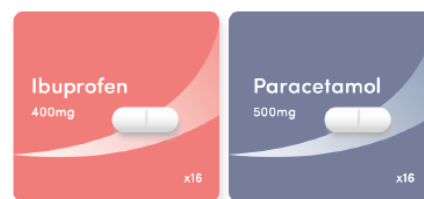


## Painkillers (analgesics)

Over the counter pain killers can help  
There is currently no strong evidence, but until we have more information:

Patients who have confirmed COVID-19, or believe they have symptoms: **should take paracetamol in preference to ibuprofen** if possible, unless your GP has told you paracetamol is not suitable for you.

**Caution:** Any medication should be taken in accordance with instructions on the packet. Taking too many of any medication can cause serious health problems and can be life threatening



## Toothache



**Get in touch with us** about your pain.

Very rarely antibiotics may help, but it is best to speak to us to decide if you need to be referred to a **local urgent care hub**

Toothache usually happens because the tooth nerves are angry and inflamed inside the tooth as a result of decay, a leaking filling, or broken tooth.

It can sometimes lead to a swelling

## Swelling



A swelling can happen inside or outside your mouth soon after a toothache. Most often, it is a result of an infection.

Applying icepacks to the jaw may help ease discomfort and some of the inflammation. Using ice can also have a numbing effect. Try holding an ice pack with a tea towel around it against their jaw for up to 15 minutes.

If you do not have an icepack use frozen peas etc.

**Get in touch with us if you have a swelling.**

We can help by remotely prescribing **antibiotics** to ease the swelling.

## Lost Fillings



If the tooth is broken or a filling is lost, you may not need treatment straight away if it is not painful and it is a clean fracture. Sometimes, an over-the-counter temporary filling material from a pharmacy or online may help – along with clove oil.

Some kits will have everything needed to handle the situation until you can see us.

**Call us for advice**, and so we can set a follow up

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## Wisdom Teeth

Wisdom tooth pain is usually due to inflammation around the gum flap that sits just over the erupting back tooth when the tooth has not come fully through. Sometimes the pain can spread around the ear too.

Usually it is because food or plaque has started to get below the gum flap. Sometimes the gum inflammation can be made worse by trauma from the tooth above biting on to the gum



Most flare ups can be managed with good home care by:

- **Excellent cleaning** (even if its sore at first). Cleaning it well encourages healing.
- Use a brush with some bristles that reach under the gum flap, like a 'single tufted brush'
- **Warm salt water gargles** can help. 30 seconds at a time, a few times a day, or Corsodyl (but watch out, that stains teeth after 2 weeks of use)
- **Soft food** in the area
- **Painkillers** if needed

If you have difficulty swallowing or difficulty opening wide or swelling in your cheek, you may need antibiotics. Call us for advice



## Bleeding gums

Bleeding from gums is NOT a dental emergency but can be worrying.

Bleeding gums are usually due to gum disease, where the gums get angry (inflamed), in response to plaque building up (food debris and bacteria, left behind from not brushing well enough).

The **bleeding gums will improve when brushing and cleaning in between the teeth improves. DO MORE CLEANING AND NOT LESS.**

**Brush TWICE a day** with a fluoride toothpaste for **2 minutes**. Concentrate especially on the areas that are bleeding. **Use floss or tepe brushes to clean between** your teeth every day.



## Ulcers.

Most ulcers should heal by 7-10 days. Non-healing ulcers or oral lesions present for more than 3 weeks should be assessed by a dentist or doctor.

*We may be able to do this remotely during this period.*

**Warm salt water gargles** (like with managing wisdom teeth, as above).

**Gentle but thorough cleaning** with a softer brush in the area may help, but try not to avoid the teeth in that area. Keeping the area clean is really important. Eat soft food in the area too.

**Mouthwashes, gels or pastilles** can help e.g. Difflam (Benzylamine) mouthwash or spray, or Oraljel



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## Lost Crown or Bridge

**Keep the crown or bridge until we can see you, somewhere safe and clean.** Disinfect it first with a simple disinfectant spray like Dettol.

It is really important to keep the tooth core in the mouth very clean and brush the surfaces as normal. Perhaps use a bigger interdental brush to clean around the sides and a mouthwash to help keep the gum around the edges healthy.

This may or may not be something the local urgent care centres accept.

**Call us to discuss your options** and if its suitable to consider glueing it back in and we can discuss let you know how if its suitable.



## Rubbing Denture

**There are some simple things you can do at home to help**

The trick here is to try and locate those areas that are rubbing. If you leave the denture in place for 5 mins or so then when it is removed you should be able to see any "rubbing areas" or sore spots. Use a good light to see.

An **Emery board file / nail file**, snapped in half can be used to smooth down the problem area. Repeat this at least half a dozen times to feel the difference – remembering that the sore area will still be sore and so you are looking at things being more comfortable rather than perfect after finishing. Leave the denture out for a day or so to help.

**Denture fixative** can also be used to provide an extra "cushion" even if you don't normally use it.

Call us and we will be able to organise for some Fixodent to be delivered to you.



## Pain or bleeding after a tooth extraction

Take painkillers as advised if needed.

Some **pink spit/taste of blood is normal** after an extraction but if the socket is bleeding freely, **bite hard** on some **clean gauze** or **rolled up clean hankie** for **15-20 minutes**.

**If bleeding doesn't stop call us** and stay biting down with the pressure on whilst you wait



## Jaw or joint aches

At times of stress like this, the muscles in our face and the ones used for chewing an 'overwork' resulting in **tense muscles that may be tight, or painful** due to clenching or grinding. Headaches may happen too as well as more tooth sensitivity and gum soreness. To help relax muscles and stretch them, some simple home physio can help:

- Open and close the jaw in a straight line, in front of a mirror, with your tongue curled back to the roof of your mouth. Try do this 2 minutes a day, for a 2 weeks.
- Avoid hard food and chewy foods like steak, biting your nails and chewing gum, which can all overwork chewing muscles.
- Be conscious to 'let your teeth apart' when you feel you are clamping down
- If very bad, try a heat pack or cold pack, which ever you find more comfortable, and painkillers





# Tips for orthodontic patients during Covid-19 pandemic

## Invisalign Aligner Treatment – FAQs

If you are in Invisalign treatment with us, we will be contacting you individually, via email and phone to check in and see how you are doing. Each case is individual and in some cases we may be able to progress your case remotely for a short period, and in others we may need to hold you on your last aligner, or have a break until we can restart.

**I still have many aligners left, should I continue to wear each aligner for 7 or 10 days?**

No, during this period, as we do not know when we will be allowed to resume any routine or elective treatment, **wear each aligner for 2 weeks**

**I am on my last aligner of the treatment, what should I do?**

Continue to wear this aligner for as long as feels clean and rigid still. **Contact us for replacement holding aligners** – During the COVID-19 period Invisalign will allow up to 3 sets at a time

**I am due to have buttons fitted soon?**

You will need to stay on this aligner (as your last aligner for now), as above

**I am moving on to the next aligner but it is not sitting down well, what should I do?**

**Go back to your last well fitting aligner** as your holding aligner. Contact us to let us know, we will want to keep you on that aligner, and perhaps order some replacement holding aligners on that stage that you have reached.

**I have lost a button, what should I do?**

**Stay on the aligner you are on**, contact us to decide if you can move on or not and we can organise for the button to be replaced when we are open again.

**I use elastics but have run out?**

Don't worry, let us know and we can organise for some to be sent to you

**I am on the last of the aligners I was given, but have more in my series to go, can I continue to move on with treatment?**

Yes – if the main treatment steps have finished, like the space making, then you can. We can organise for the the next few aligners to be delivered to you. We will also need to have virtual online consultation to see how your getting along.

**My aligner is irritating the tongue or cheek or digging in the gum**

**Let us know**, and use an Emery board/nail file to dumb down the area you feel the sharpness or discomfort is coming from. If this doesn't work, go back to the previous aligner

**I am on my last aligner, can I wear it at night time whilst I wait for my next appointment again?**

**Yes** – in these circumstances, you can, but if the aligner feels tight putting it in, or if teeth move back, use full time again and contact us for a fresh replacement aligner

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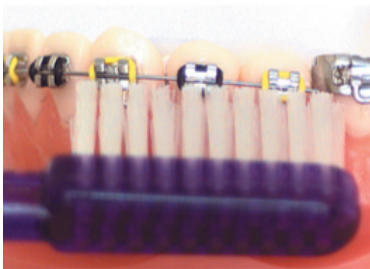


## Orthodontic Brace Problems

You or a family member may be in brace treatment here or elsewhere, and hopefully these tips may help in the event of a problem with your brace.

Generally, whilst your brace is not being adjusted, the wires will still be working a little, and the brace will naturally become 'passive' – which is safe.

**We will want to touch base with you via phone or video consultation at least once a month, to see how you are getting along.**



To prevent problems occurring whilst in braces some simple things can help:

- **Avoid hard foods** like nuts that may lead to a bracket coming off or the wire bending
- **Avoid sticky food** that can cause more plaque to build up around the brace
- **Exemplary oral hygiene:** brushing 3 times a day with your standard toothbrush, followed by the additional small interdental or christmas tree shaped brush all around the brace brackets. As an adjunct, use of a fluoride mouthrinse eg. Fluoriguard (225ppm), once a day
- **Low sugar diets** – where possible avoid snacking on sugars and drinks with added sugar. Fizzy drinks should be avoided in particular.



## Advice for brace problems:

The **British Orthodontic Society** has made a very useful resource for all orthodontic patients and we would like to refer to this:

<https://www.bos.org.uk/COVID19-BOS-Advice/Patients-Advice>

### Lost or Broken retainers

**Contact us to let us know** if you have lost or broken it. It may be that we have a previous model we can make one off, or your last scan.

Although dental laboratories are shut, Invisalign are able to make their retainers and have them delivered to you or us (Invisalign's Vivera Retainers)

### Broken fixed Retainer

**If you can:** push wire back down towards the tooth as much as possible with fingers or tweezers. Cover the sharp end, with orthodontic wax (which we can send) or blu-tac to stop discomfort. **Call us.**

**You can either:** cut the exposed unbonded wire using tweezers and nail clippers/scissors, **or** gently pull the wire to remove the whole retainer.

**You must use of removable your retainers at least every night as minimum.**

***We hope this information has been useful to you. At these unpredictable and dynamic times we will continue to do our best to support your health and wellbeing so please do call if you have any concerns.***

***Yasmin and the team at Oatlands Dental Lounge are here for you.***

***Stay safe and lets stay positive, together we are stronger and we will overcome this!***



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**How to get in touch  
during COVID-19 closure**



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