

Action Update Mouth Care

Why do you have to brush your teeth?

29% of homeless people brush their teeth less than once a day. This can have a major impact on mouth health. For example, 56% have had bleeding gums, 28% have had gum disease and 45% report to have bad breath.

Cleaning your teeth **twice a day** helps get rid of plaque and bits of food from your mouth. It will make your mouth healthier, your breath fresher, and your teeth brighter.

If you need a **toothbrush and paste** you can always ask staff at any day centres or hostel as they will usually be able to give them to you for free.

You don't need water to clean your teeth. Using just tooth paste and a brush works just as well.

Sugar free chewing gum can actually be good for your teeth, because it causes you to produce saliva. Saliva will remove the bad bacteria in your mouth and clean it out of your system.

Your teeth are important—You'll miss them when they are gone! Take steps to keep your mouth healthy.

- Problems with teeth are common among homeless people.
- Brush at least twice a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride.
- Watch for warning signs of mouth health issues.
- Spit—don't rinse!



Fold 1

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Fold 2

Keeping Teeth and Gums Healthy

Keep an eye out for the following issues, it may be a sign of tooth decay or gum disease.

- **Toothache** or sensitive teeth.
- Mild to sharp **pain** when eating or drinking something sweet, hot or cold.
- Visible **holes** or pits in your teeth.
- Brown, black or white **staining** on any teeth
- **Pain** when you bite down.
- Red, **swollen** or **tender** gums or other pain in your mouth.
- **Bleeding** while brushing, flossing, or eating food.
- Gums that are **receding** or pulling away from teeth, causing teeth to look longer than before.
- **Loose** or separating teeth.

Groundswell Homeless Health Peer Advocacy

Do you need help getting to health appointments? Groundswell Peer Advocates supported people to over 2500 health appointments last year. Ask a key worker to refer you or get in touch.



ACTION UPDATE!

MOUTH CARE

4 Easy steps to care for your teeth and mouth

1. Start by brushing your back teeth and move to the front. You don't need running water!



2. Clean your gums towards the chewing surface. Use small strokes that get right in between your teeth.



3. Clean all your teeth, in between and behind: don't forget the teeth at the back!



4. Remember to brush your tongue. This can help reduce bad breath.

Cleaning should take a minimum of 2 minutes. Remember to spit and don't rinse your mouth afterwards!

A few easy steps can make all the difference to your teeth

- Brush twice a day.
- Don't rinse your mouth after brushing - it washes away the toothpaste which protects your teeth.
- Use tooth paste that contains at least '1350ppm Monofluorophosphate' - Check the tube to make sure
- Change your tooth brush at least every 3 months.
- Use floss to clean gaps between teeth.


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