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Information on oral health care for interpreters

Tietoa suun terveydenhuollosta tulkeille



Oral health care

Oral health care services included:

- advice on oral care at home (self-care) and nutrition (this guidance and advice is called preventive care)
- dental check-ups
- urgent first aid
- dental care that treats common oral and dental diseases
- specialized dental care for more serious diseases in the mouth and teeth

Oral health care (dental care) treats diseases that have already occurred in the mouth and provides instructions to prevent oral diseases. Oral health care services are provided in wellbeing services counties and private dental clinics.

When you call to book a dental appointment, a professional assesses the need for care for yourself/your child. According to an assessment made by a professional, the client is directed to either a dental nurse, dental hygienist or dentist.

Dental nurses and dental hygienists mainly provide preventive care. Dentists diagnose the disease and perform corrective treatment, such as dental fillings. If necessary, the dentist will refer the customer to specialist dental care. The condition of the mouth and the need for treatment determine whether the client is treated in specialized dental care.

A dental nurse, dental hygienist or dentist prepares a treatment plan for the client. According to the treatment plan, the client is either invited to the next appointment or the client books an appointment for oral health care themselves.

Dental care is free for children under 18 years of age. However, general anesthesia in specialized dental care is subject to a fee, even for those under 18.

What is done in oral health care?

Oral health care includes oral health check-ups, guidance on proper oral hygiene, advice on dietary choices that support oral health, cleaning of teeth, sealing of teeth, repairing teeth, root canal treatments, and tooth extractions. The following is a more detailed explanation of what these most common measures mean:

Oral health check-up:

During the oral health check-up, the teeth, oral mucous membranes, tongue and bite are examined. During a dental check-up, the customer receives information about the state of their oral health (whether everything is in order, whether the tooth/teeth need to be filled, or whether the customer needs advice on how to take care of their mouth at home, or whether they have inflamed gums, for example). The client receives advice from a professional on how to take care of their teeth correctly (the right brushing technique, the right toothpaste, cleaning between the teeth and the use of xylitol) and how nutrition affects oral health.

Oral care at home (self-care guidance):

An oral health care professional teaches you how to brush your teeth and clean between the teeth correctly. A professional will also help you choose the right tools (regular/electric toothbrush, flosser and interdental brushes/silicone sticks).

Eating habits:

An oral health care professional will tell you what kind of diet and eating habits support good oral health. The professional will also tell you what kind of eating habits and what kind of diet endangers your oral health for oral diseases.

Tartar/ calculus/ tooth stone removal:

Dirt/plaque that has hardened on the tooth surface is removed with instruments. This is usually an unpleasant but painless procedure. Even if the tooth surface is cleaned with instruments, the tooth is not damaged.

Plating/ coating/ resurfacing:

There are deep spots on the surfaces of large back teeth that the toothbrush cannot reach. The tooth can be resurfaced, in which case brushing can keep the tooth clean. In the coating, a plastic substance is applied to the surface of the tooth. The coating protects the tooth from cavities. Resurfacing does not cause pain, and resurfacing keeps your own tooth intact.

Tooth filling:

In filling, the damaged part of the tooth due to tooth decay is removed with instruments (drilling) and the cavity left in the tooth is filled with a filler.

Root canal treatment:

In root canal treatment, the damaged/inflamed pulp of the tooth is removed. Once the pulp is removed, the pain often stops. The root canals are filled and the tooth is filled normally. This procedure requires multiple visits (three visits on average).

Tooth extraction:

The tooth is damaged or inflamed so severely that it must be removed. The tooth to be removed and its surroundings are always anesthetized before the tooth is extracted. Teeth are not extracted at the customer's request, nor without the patient's consent. There is always a justified medical reason for tooth extraction.

Dental care vocabulary in plain English

Dental care uses a lot of its own vocabulary/terminology. Below is an explanation of what these most common words/terms mean:

Abrasion = damage to the tooth, for example, due to brushing too hard.

Acid attack = A chain of events in which bacteria start working every time you eat or drink something, except for water. Immediately after eating, the tooth is momentarily softer and can develop cavities more easily.

Anaesthesia-based dental care = the patient is put under general anaesthesia like in surgery, and the dental treatment is performed while the patient is asleep.

Attrition = the wearing down of tooth enamel due to strong tooth-to-tooth contact.

Caries/ cavities = damage has progressed through the enamel to the dentine. The tooth needs to be repaired.

Crown = the visible part of the tooth on top of the gum.

Dental caries/ tooth decay = The protective layer of the tooth, the enamel, is damaged and the damage progresses through the enamel to the inside of the tooth, to the dentine.

Dentin = The dentine between the enamel and the core.

Enamel = protective layer of the tooth.

Erosion = chemical wear of the tooth caused by food or drink.

Filling = artificial material to be placed in the tooth.

Fissure = deep groove/line/shape on the tooth surface.

Fluoride = tooth-strengthening substance.

Gingivitis = the tissue/gum around the tooth is swollen and/or bleeding.

Gum = soft tissue around the tooth.

Hypoplasia = enamel development disorder.

Initial caries/incipient cavity/ beginning of the hole = damage to the enamel. The tooth does not need to be corrected, but the tooth must be cared for at home according to the professional instructions.

Incisive = front tooth.

Molar = Large and flat tooth (located at the back of the mouth).

Permanent teeth = teeth that replace primary teeth/ baby teeth.

Plaque = dirt/bacterial coating on the surface of the tooth.

Premolar = intermediate tooth (located between the front tooth and back tooth).

Primary teeth/ baby teeth = the child's first teeth (20 teeth).

Pulp = the core of the tooth with nerves and blood vessels.

Regular mealtimes = eat every 2–4 hours 5 times a day (breakfast, lunch, snack, dinner and evening snack).

Root canal treatment = the core of the tooth, i.e. the nerves are removed.

Snacking = eating between mealtimes throughout the day.

Tartar/calculus/ tooth stone = hardened dirt on the surface of the tooth (bacterial coating/plaque).

Xylitol = a substance that protects teeth. Prevent bacteria from causing cavities. Prevents the bacteria from being transmitted to the child and helps dirt come off more easily when brushing your teeth.



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Niitty 2 -project 2023-2026

**Working together with immigrant
families for a better everyday life**

**More information about the project:
<https://projects.tuni.fi/niitty2/>**

**Family Info material portal:
tuni.fi/perheinfo**

This guidance sheet is mainly based on the following sources of
information :

Caries (control). Current Care Guidelines. A working group appointed by
the Finnish Medical Society Duodecim and the Finnish Dental Society
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