

Dental services

North Yarra Community Health Centre 9419 5266

Inner South Community
Health Service – Dental Fix Service 9525 1300

For more information or dental services contact:

Dental Health Services Victoria 9646 3188

Information in this brochure is provided by:

Oral Health Therapy Unit
School of Dental Science
The University of Melbourne
and the Women's Alcohol & Drug Service
The Royal Women's Hospital



Contact details

Women's Alcohol and Drug Service
8.30am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday
264 Cardigan Street Victoria 3053 (03) 9344 3631

Email: womens.ads@rwh.org.au

Website: www.rwh.org.au/wads

After hours assistance
RWH emergency department (03) 9344 2301

Other important numbers

Drug info line
for written information
and resources Free Call – 1300 858 584

Direct Line
for counselling
and referral (24/7) Free Call – 1800 888 236

The Royal Women's Hospital (03) 9344 2000

The Royal Women's Hospital
Young Women's Program (03) 9344 2189
Website: www.ypp.org.au

YSAS (Youth Substance Abuse Service) (03) 9418 1020

Women's Health Information Centre
Free information about
a range of women's health issues
Melbourne callers (03) 9344 2007

Rural/country callers 1800 442 007 (free call)

Email: whic@rwh.org.au

Website: <http://wellwomens.rwh.org.au>



Dental health for people taking methadone



Dental myths and facts

Myth: Taking methadone will make my teeth fall out!

Fact: The major factor in tooth loss is the continual breakdown of the gums and bone, which hold the teeth. Build-up of bacteria (plaque) on the teeth irritates the gums, which swell and become puffy. As a result, the bone holding the teeth in place begins to shrink away causing the teeth to fall out. Brushing twice a day and cleaning between your teeth two or three times per week, with floss or toothpicks, will help reduce the irritation and prevent gum disease.

Myth: Methadone will make my teeth rot!

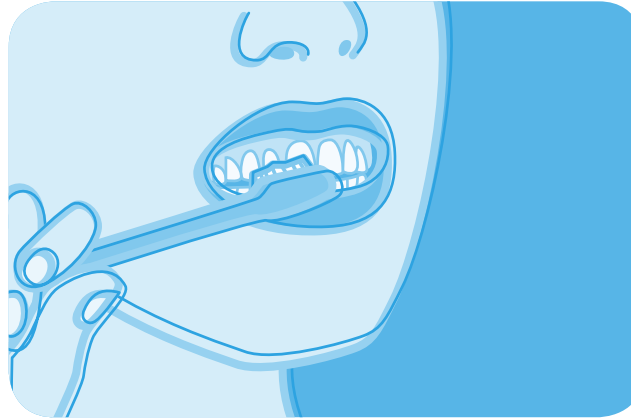
Fact: This is an unnecessary event which can be avoided. Decay is caused when bacteria (in plaque) feed on sugar from your diet and produce acids. The acids eat at the tooth structure. Methadone can reduce saliva flow causing a dry mouth. This creates the perfect environment for sugar to attack your teeth and cause decay. Tooth decay can occur unless you reduce the effects of the acids by rinsing your mouth with water after taking methadone, using fluoride products, increasing saliva flow by chewing sugar free gum, and reducing the amount of plaque by cleaning teeth daily.

Myth: Going on methadone will make my teeth ache for days!

Fact: This is true in a few people, but not in all. For most people it is due to being able to feel infections in the mouth. Methadone taken at the correct dosage does not have a sedating effect and once your dose is stable you start to sense pain. Therefore, people with a hole in a tooth or swollen gums may start to feel the pain related to infection. Work with your dentist and carer to decide when it would be best to start dental treatment.

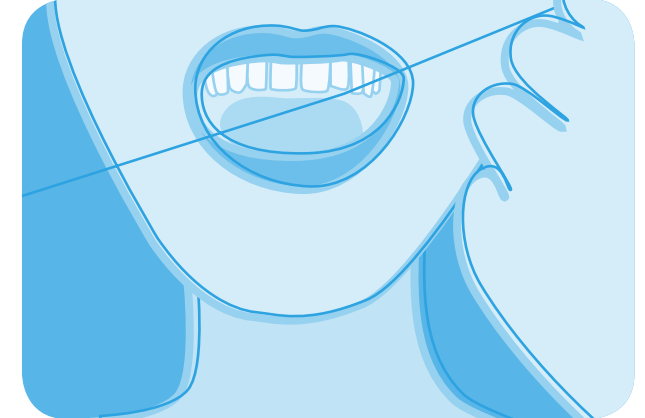
Brushing

Using a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste, place the bristle at an angle of 45 degrees to the gum line. Move the brush in tiny circles over the tooth and gum. Spend about 10 seconds on each tooth, and make sure that all surfaces are cleaned. Use a back and forth motion for the chewing surfaces.



Flossing

Using about 45cm of floss, wind the ends around the middle fingers and grip the floss with your index finger and thumb. Guide the floss between the teeth and use a gentle up and down motion without snapping the floss onto the gums.



Handy tips

- Chewing sugar free gum after taking methadone will stimulate saliva flow in your mouth, reducing the chance of dental decay. Chewing sugar free gum after eating meals will also help.
- If possible, drink water or rinse with a fluoride mouthwash after taking methadone.
- Eat a healthy balanced diet. Avoid frequent snacking on sugared foods and drink.
- Try to visit a dentist every 6-12 months. Regular checkups will detect any problems early and help to prevent dental pain.
- These handy tips will help you protect your teeth and smile.