

Rationale

The prevention of dental caries involves the practice of good oral hygiene and the use of simple over the counter high strength fluoride toothpaste and mouthwashes. A GP appointment and prescription treatment is not necessary for this.

Recommendations for clinicians

- Provide the patient with a 'non-prescription' sheet or a patient information leaflet to promote education about self-limiting conditions suitable for self-care when appropriate.
- Advise patients of safe and effective self-care measures:
 - Visit your dentist regularly
 - Cut down on sugary and starchy food and drinks
 - Brush your teeth twice a day
 - Avoid smoking or drinking alcohol
- Advise patients to seek dental attention in the following circumstances:
 - Toothache
 - Tooth sensitivity
 - Grey, brown or black spot on teeth
 - Bad breath
 - An unpleasant taste in your mouth

Example of products available to buy over the counter*

Colgate® toothpaste (£1.00-£6.00 for 75ml)

Sensodyne® toothpaste (£3.50-£6.00 for 75ml)

Oral - B® toothpaste (£1.50-£5.00 for 75ml)

Listerine® mouthwash – Not licensed for children under 6 years (£3.50-£5.60 for 500ml)

Corsodyl® mouthwash – Not licensed for children under 6 years (£3.00-£5.00 for 250ml)

For further information see Self-care forum <http://www.selfcareforum.org/>, NHS UK <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>, Patient UK <https://patient.info/>

*Prices correct at time of writing and are subject to change

