



Featured

# The link between smoking and oral health

The last few weeks we've had a number of patients discuss the fact they're having a go at quitting smoking. Today, there is an enormous amount of information available to indicate that smoking has a negative impact on your health and a huge array of aids to help in the quitting process.

Most people are aware of the risk for oral cancer from smoking, but you may be surprised that eliminating smoking will do more for you than just about any other kind of dental health protocol (not that we advocate quitting brushing and flossing at the same time).

While you may not realize it, smoking changes the whole environment of the mouth. It decreases saliva flow which increases the risk of gum disease, erosion and decay. It also makes dental treatments less likely to succeed or survive.



### Tooth stains and bad breath

Have you ever met someone and felt like you had a good rapport, yet something felt wrong? If you smoke and the other person doesn't, your breath is enough to turn them off before they even get to know you. Even though you can use teeth whitening agents to remove tobacco stains from your teeth, there is no hiding the smell of stale cigarette smoke from your breath.

In fact, you may even find that trying to cover bad breath from smoking with mouthwashes will make it seem even worse.

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### This month...

*Have you tried to quit smoking?*

*This month we give you a head start by letting you in on some surprising, but welcome benefits, from kicking the habit.*

*In keeping with her regular highlights, our hygienist Jenna gives special advice to those who have partial or temporary dentures.*

*Lastly, we present a community piece to make you smile. It's your chance to help out one of our charitable clients in her quest to look after some less fortunate furry friends.*

*Keep smiling!*

*Dr Simon Franks*



> continued

**Smoking and gum disease**

As you may be aware, cigarette smoke includes a number of chemicals. As these settle on your teeth and gums, they can cause all kinds of damage. Even if your gums are only affected slightly from cigarette smoke, it can still lead to long-term problems. This includes receding gums that will expose the roots to bacteria that will infect them and cause gum disease. Smoking also masks the signs of inflammation in the mouth making it seem like a 'healthy place'. Often when you quit smoking you will notice an increase in bleeding gums which has been hidden. If left untreated this can cause major damage to the structures that keep your teeth firmly attached in your mouth.

**Oral cancer and smoking**

When you smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products, there is always a chance that you will develop some

type of oral cancer. Even though our exams are designed to help detect this, it is important to realize that this form of cancer spreads faster than many other kinds. Aside from growing fairly quickly, oral tumours can also get into the lymph system fairly quickly. Since these nodes happen to be in the neck, removing them tends to be much harder than in other parts of the body. Therefore, if you smoke and fail to pay attention to good oral care, you might wind up in a bit of trouble. At the same time, you may also find that your treatment options are more limited than you may have been expecting.

Here at Bite Dental, we know that smoking has a negative impact on your dental health.

While we are not going to force you to stop smoking, we can still do our best to ensure that as little damage occurs to your teeth as possible. When you visit our office, you will receive personalised care, as well as answers to all of your vital questions about smoking and oral health.



Celebrate everyday heros. Let us know if you have a cause you'd like us to shout about.

*Healthy Hygiene Hints*

**Put your teeth on the shelf!**

Whether it be a complete denture, a partial one or even a temporary one—many, many, MANY people are wearing a removable dental plate in some form. It's also common, (especially when they are in the place of front teeth) to be self-conscious without them in. This is completely understandable, however if your plate is left in all the time it can be like going to bed with your shoes on... and nasty fungal infections can start to grow underneath!

To prevent this, all you need do is give your gums a break. Ideally it's good to leave your plate out at night (in water to prevent drying out). If you don't like doing this, you can at least take them out while in the shower and give your gums a rinse.

*Jenna*



**Community**

**RSPCA Million Paws Walk**

We don't love furry teeth but we do love furry pets! — The RSPCA cares for more than 44 000 animals each year as a result of them being abandoned or neglected. As a non-government organisation it receives less than 1% in support, and community charity is vital in maintaining the operation in the hope of giving animals a second chance at finding a 'forever' home to love them. Our pet loving client Lee Henri is participating in the 2013 RSPCA Million Paws Walk. Help out her fundraising efforts now. Its quick and painless and you really will make a difference to a furry one's life. Visit: [http://www.millionpawswalkfundraising.com.au/team\\_elly\\_6](http://www.millionpawswalkfundraising.com.au/team_elly_6)



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