

Inherited Bleeding Disorders (IBDs) Looking after your teeth and gums Information for patients

Who is this leaflet for?

You may have a bleeding disorder such as haemophilia or von Willebrand Disease. You may be a relative or carer for someone with these conditions. We have also put in a section for dentists.

Why are your teeth and gums important?

It is important for people with bleeding or clotting disorders to take good care of their teeth and gums. This can reduce the chances of future problems like pain, infections or extractions. It can also reduce the need for medical treatment such as transfusion of clotting factors or blood products.

How do I prevent dental problems?

You can prevent dental problems by:

- Brushing your teeth, at least twice daily with a fluoride paste.
- Reducing the frequency and amount of sugar in your diet.
- Avoiding smoking.
- Having regular check-ups with a dentist, at least twice a year.

Attending the dentist

You must tell your dentist about your medical condition. If you are not sure, just check with your Haemophilia Centre (contact details on the back cover). Remember to update your dentist of any changes.

Most of the time, it may be fine to attend your general dental practice for regular check-ups and most types of dental treatment. Your dentist **must** contact your Haemophilia Centre for advice before some types of dental treatment, because of the higher risk of bleeding complications, such as:

- Tooth extractions.
- Nerve blocks.
- Deep gum cleaning (deep scaling)
- Gum surgery.
- Dental implants.

Frequently asked questions

Can I use my local dentist?

Yes, you can use your local dentist for most of your dental care. Many of us like getting a full range of dental care in a convenient location. Your local dentist may be able to do many aspects of treatment. However, this depends on two things; the severity of your condition and type of dental treatment you need.

If you or your dentist needs more advice, please contact your Haemophilia Centre on 01792 200368 (Mon– Fri 9 to 5).

Should I brush my teeth if my gums bleed?

Bleeding gums are a sign of gum disease. Commonly, people notice this when brushing their teeth. Sometimes, people avoid brushing due to the bleeding. In fact, this makes the problem worse in the long term. If gum disease progresses, teeth can become loose and eventually be lost. We recommend a soft or medium toothbrush with a small head. This should be used with a pea-sized amount of toothpaste containing fluoride, at least twice a day. Electric toothbrushes are also very effective.

What if my gums continue to bleed despite brushing regularly?

If your gums continue to bleed, then seek advice from your dentist. Your dentist might recommend methods for brushing and cleaning your teeth more effectively.

Your bleeding disorder may mean that your gums bleed a little more easily and for a little longer until the gums heal. Your dentist and/or hygienist may also recommend professional cleaning. Often, patients are advised to take Tranexamic acid tablets or mouthwash before and after professional teeth cleaning.

What is Tranexamic acid?

Tranexamic acid prevents blood clots from breaking down and helps to stop bleeding.

What happens if I need a tooth extracted?

This **must** always be co-ordinated by your Haemophilia Centre. They will arrange this with your dentist or a Specialist Dentist Centre (SDC). They will advise about the need for factor replacement therapy based on the severity of your bleeding disorder. Tranexamic acid tablets and/or mouthwash are also normally prescribed before and after the extraction. In addition the dentist may stitch the wound and use a special surgical pack to stop any bleeding.

I cannot find a dentist locally. What should I do?

Phone your Haemophilia Centre on 01792 200368
(Emergency and out of hours contacts are on answer phone)

You will be given a number to contact depending on where you live. You will be assigned to one of the dedicated dental teams in the Hospital Dental Services or the Community Dental Services depending on the severity of your condition and your dental treatment needs.

My dentist seems to be unsure of treating me because of my condition. What should I do?

Please show your dentist this leaflet. It has a section for dentists.

What should I do in an emergency?

Phone your own dentist for advice first or contact NHS direct on 08454647.

If you are not registered or cannot contact an emergency dentist, then phone the Haemophilia Centre on 01792 200368 (Emergency and out of hours contacts are on answer phone)

For more information, please visit www.wfh.org
Oral care for people with haemophilia or a hereditary bleeding tendency.

This space may be used to write information about your medical condition(s) and list of the medicines you currently take