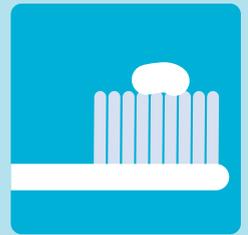


Getting NHS dental treatment in Scotland



What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet tells you how to use NHS dental services in Scotland. It explains:

- how to find an NHS dentist
- what happens after you have registered
- what treatment you can get as an NHS patient
- how to get dental treatment in an emergency, and
- how to find out more about dental services in Scotland.

How can I find a dentist who provides NHS treatment?

- To find an NHS dentist:
 - contact your NHS board and ask for a list of local dentists who provide NHS treatment (see page 11 to find out how to do this), or
 - visit **www.nhs24.com** and follow the links to the 'Find your Local Services' section.
- When you have found a dentist who provides NHS treatment, ask them if you can register as an NHS patient.
- Some dentists cannot take new NHS patients.
- Some dentists only treat certain groups of people, for example children, or people getting certain benefits.

Not all dentists provide NHS treatment.

What happens when I register?

- If a dentist agrees to accept you as an NHS patient, they will:
 - ask for some information about you, for example your name and address
 - ask you to sign a form to register
 - arrange for you to have a dental check-up, and
 - offer you information about:
 - their dental practice and the NHS dental services it provides, and
 - the dentist who will treat you and where you will be treated, and give you a contact phone number.
- You can ask to register your child at the same time.
- Try to register your child soon after they are born, or as soon as their first tooth appears.

What happens after I have registered?

You will have a dental check-up. You may have this when you register with the dentist, or you may have to come back another time.

- During the check-up, your dentist will:
 - ask about any health problems you have had
 - examine your mouth, teeth and gums
 - tell you how to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy, and

- tell you if you need treatment.
- If you need treatment, your dentist will:
 - explain your options, including what treatments can be done on the NHS
 - let you know how much the treatment may cost
 - give you a treatment plan setting out the treatment you need (see below for more information on treatment plans), and
 - tell you when you need to come back for another check-up or more treatment.
- Once you are registered, you can stay with the same dentist for as long as you wish. However, your dentist may decide to end your registration, for example if you miss your appointments.

What is a treatment plan?

- A treatment plan is a document that sets out:
 - any dental treatment you need, and
 - roughly how much it may cost.
- Your dentist should give you a treatment plan at your first check-up and at other times when you need one. You can ask for a treatment plan any time you are having treatment. You can take a copy away.

What treatment can I get as an NHS patient?

- As a registered NHS patient, you can get all the care, advice and treatment you need to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy.
- If you want any cosmetic work, you will need to pay for it privately. Some treatments are not available under the NHS, for example:
 - teeth whitening
 - white fillings in back teeth
 - white crowns on back teeth
 - dental implants.
- Most dentists who provide NHS treatment also offer private treatment. If you choose to get private treatment, your dentist will:
 - tell you how much any private treatment will cost
 - explain your treatment options (including what you can have done on the NHS), and
 - get your agreement to any treatment.

Will I have to pay for NHS treatment?

- It depends. Many adults over the age of 18 have to pay. In Scotland, NHS charges are set by the Scottish Government.
- If you have to pay, you can ask your dentist how much it will cost before your treatment begins.

- Some adults can get help with some or all of the costs. For example, you can get free NHS dental treatment if you:
 - are pregnant
 - have had a baby in the last 12 months, or
 - get income support or certain other benefits.
- You must tell your dentist at every visit if you do not have to pay NHS dental charges or you get help to pay them under the NHS Low Income Scheme.
 - You will need to show proof of this, for example an NHS Tax Credit exemption certificate or an Income Support order book. The leaflet **A quick guide to help with health costs (HCS2)** tells you what documents to bring – see below for how to get an HCS2 leaflet.
 - If you don't have these documents with you, you will not have to pay for your treatment, but a check will be made that you are entitled to free NHS dental treatment or help with the costs.
- To find out more about getting free NHS dental treatment, or about help if you are on a low income, phone the NHS inform Helpline on **0800 22 44 88**.

The leaflet **A quick guide to help with health costs (HCS2)** also tells you if you can get free treatment or help with the costs. This is available from any citizens advice bureau and Jobcentre Plus office. You can phone the NHS inform Helpline and ask for a copy or look on the internet (www.scotland.gov.uk/healthcosts).

Can my dentist stop providing NHS treatment?

- Yes. Your dentist can decide to stop providing NHS treatment.
- You will normally be told about this at least three months in advance.
- Your dentist must first do their best to complete any care and treatment you need.

If your dentist stops providing NHS treatment, your local NHS board can tell you which dentists provide NHS treatment in your area. You may not be able to find another dentist who can take you on as an NHS patient. (See page 1 for how to find an NHS dentist.)

Can I change my dentist?

- Yes. You should let your dental practice know that you will be doing this. If you register with a new NHS dentist, you will no longer be registered with your old dentist.

I am not registered with a dentist. Can I get NHS dental care?

- Yes. You may still be able to receive occasional treatment under the NHS if you are not registered with a dentist. But you will need to find a dentist who agrees to give you occasional treatment.
- It's up to each dentist to decide whether they will treat you as an occasional patient.

- If you visit a dentist as an occasional patient, you will not be able to receive the full range of NHS dental treatments.

What if I need dental care in an emergency?

- If you are registered with a dentist:
 - during opening hours, contact your practice as early in the day as possible
 - outside opening hours, call the practice and an answer-phone message will let you know how to get advice or treatment.
- If you are not registered with a dentist:
 - during opening hours, contact your local NHS board. They will try to make sure you can get dental care but only if it's an emergency, for example, if you have:
 - severe pain that cannot be controlled with ordinary painkillers
 - swelling that is making it difficult for you to breathe or swallow
 - bleeding that won't stop after one of your teeth has been taken out, or
 - an injury to your mouth.
 - outside opening hours, phone NHS 24 on **08454 24 24 24** (textphone 18001 08454 24 24 24) and they will:
 - assess your symptoms

- recommend appropriate treatment, and
 - arrange for you to get treatment in your area, if you need it.
- You will need to register with a dentist for any follow-up care.

What can I expect from my dentist?

Your dentist will:

- if you are registered, provide any NHS dental treatment you need to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy
- explain your treatment options and let you know what treatment can be done under the NHS
- make sure you know how much your treatment may cost
- let you know about any changes to your treatment, and
- ask for your agreement to any treatment.

Your dentist will not:

- ask you to become a private patient as a condition of giving your child NHS treatment
- ask you to pay for a private check-up before they will accept you as an NHS patient
- try to persuade you to have private treatment rather than NHS treatment
- tell you that the treatment you need is not available under the NHS, if it is

- ask you to pay a deposit before a check-up, whether this will be refunded to you or not, or
- charge for treatment without first examining you.

What does my dentist expect from me?

You should:

- attend for treatment as often as your dentist recommends
- let your dentist know as soon as possible if you can't attend an appointment – he or she can charge a fee if you cancel at short notice or don't turn up for an appointment. If you regularly miss appointments, your dentist can end your registration
- let your dental practice know when any of your personal information changes, for example, if you move house
- pay for your treatment when asked – your dentist can refuse to treat you if you haven't paid for previous treatment and can end your registration
- treat dental staff with respect – if you are abusive, violent or threaten a member of staff or another patient at your dental practice, your dentist can refuse to treat you and can end your registration immediately
- follow advice on how to look after your mouth, teeth and gums
- follow advice on how to look after your child's mouth, teeth and gums (visit the Childsmile website at www.child-smile.org for more information about this)

- let your dentist know about any changes to your general health or to any medicine you are taking, and
- ask if you don't understand something.

What if I'm unhappy with my dental care?

- If you are unhappy with your dental care, speak to your dentist or a member of staff at the dental practice.
- If you are still unhappy, you can make a complaint. The practice should tell you how to do this.
- For more information about making a complaint about NHS dental services, see the leaflet **Making a complaint about the NHS**. You can get a copy from most places where you receive NHS care, from your local NHS board, or on the internet (www.hris.org.uk).
- For more information about making a complaint about a dental professional (a dentist, dental hygienist, dental nurse, dental technician, dental therapist, clinical dental technician or an orthodontic therapist), phone the **General Dental Council** on **0207 887 3800** or email them at information@gdc-uk.org

How to find out more

For more information about anything in this leaflet:

- ask the staff at your dental practice
- contact the dental helpline at your NHS board. If you need help to do this, phone the NHS inform Helpline on **0800 22 44 88** (textphone 18001 0800 22 44 88; the helpline also provides an interpreting service), or
- look on the internet (**www.nhs24.com**).

Email ask@hris.org.uk to ask for this information in another language or format.

This information is available on the Scottish Government website (**www.scotland.gov.uk**) and on the HRIS website (**www.hris.org.uk**).



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