Dental Check-ups in Melbourne | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/general-dentistry/dental-checkup/

Details:

A dental check-up is a routine examination in which our dentist looks at your teeth, gums, bite and mouth to maintain your oral health and to find problems early, before they become serious. At Core Dental we recommend a thorough check-up for anyone who has not been to the dentist in a while, ideally combined with a professional scale and clean with one of our dental hygienists. Check-ups are available at all nine of our clinics across Melbourne, six days a week.

What is a dental check-up?

A dental check-up is a preventive service. It is designed to assess the health of your teeth and gums and to spot decay, gum disease, cracks, wear or failing fillings while they are small and simpler to treat. We tailor the visit to you, so the length and content depend on your history and needs. A full examination generally takes between 30 minutes and one hour.

Who should have a check-up with us?

Everyone with natural teeth, dentures or implants benefits from regular review. We particularly encourage a thorough check-up if you have not seen a dentist for some time, if you have noticed bleeding gums, sensitivity or pain, or if you are new to the area. Tell us about any worries when you book so we can allow enough time.

How often should you have a check-up?

Many people attend every six months as part of routine preventive care, which helps keep teeth and gums healthy, prevent dental emergencies and avoid larger treatment later. The right interval depends on your own oral health risks, so your dentist may suggest more or less frequent visits for you.

What does a comprehensive check-up involve?

A comprehensive visit with us usually includes:

a clinical examination of your teeth, soft tissues, gums, bite and existing restorations

diagnostic imaging, such as bitewing X-rays and, where appropriate, a panoramic X-ray (OPG)

a professional scale and clean, including removal of calculus, polishing and fluoride where advised

an oral cancer screening

a treatment plan explaining what needs attention now and what can be monitored

What does the clinical examination cover?

Our dentist checks every tooth surface for decay, cracks, wear and failing restorations. They assess the soft tissues of your cheeks, tongue, palate, floor of mouth, lips and throat. They evaluate gum health, including probing depths and gum recession, and look for signs of grinding, clenching or a bite that does not meet evenly. They also review existing fillings, crowns and bridges.

Are X-rays part of a check-up?

Imaging is usually included when it is clinically appropriate. Typically this is two to four bitewing X-rays, which help detect decay between teeth and bone loss. Your dentist may recommend a panoramic X-ray (OPG) to look at wisdom teeth, the jaw joints and overall bone levels. Our practices use digital X-rays, and we explain why each image is needed.

What happens during the scale and clean?

A scale and clean removes calculus, which is hardened plaque, from above and below the gum line. We then polish to remove surface stains and, where advised, apply fluoride to help protect against decay. Our dental hygienists and therapists also show you how to brush and clean between your teeth at home.

What happens after the examination?

Your dentist summarises the findings, sets out recommended treatment in order of priority and explains what needs attention now and what can be watched. You receive a written treatment plan and quote before any treatment starts, so you can compare options and payment arrangements.

How much does a check-up cost, and how can you pay?

Fees depend on the clinic and your needs. Fees published as at September 2026 for new patients included a New Patient Welcome Pack at $175 (an OPG is an extra $130 if required) and a New Patient Complete Exam and Clean at $295. Please confirm current prices with your clinic. Our No-Gap Check-Up and Clean may leave new patients with private health cover that includes dental with no out-of-pocket cost, depending on their level of cover. HICAPS claiming is available on-site. See our no-gap dental check-up page for the terms.

Where can you have a check-up at Core Dental?

You can book a check-up at any of our clinics: Southbank , South Melbourne , Caroline Springs , Carrum Downs , Epping , Wyndham , Berwick , Bayside and Glenferrie . Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Who carries out your check-up?

Our general dentists perform your examination, and our dental hygienists and therapists provide scale and clean appointments. If something needs specialist input, we can involve one of our registered specialists. See our dentists and registered specialists page.

What does the research say about how often to come in?

The six-month check-up is the most familiar piece of dental advice there is. It is also less settled than its familiarity suggests, and being straightforward about that is more useful to you than repeating it.

A Cochrane systematic review, "Recall intervals for oral health in primary care patients", examined the question directly. Its summary of the position is that "there is ongoing debate about the frequency with which patients should attend for a dental check-up and the effects on oral health of the interval between check-ups", and that while "recommendations regarding optimal recall intervals vary between countries and dental healthcare systems", that "6-month dental check-ups have traditionally been advocated by general dental practitioners in many high-income countries".

On the evidence behind that tradition, the review is blunter still: "Traditionally, patients have been encouraged to attend for routine dental check-ups at regular 6-month intervals, irrespective of their risk of developing dental disease. There is, however, a weak evidence-base underpinning this recommendation."

The reasoning against a single universal figure is about variation between people. The review notes that variations in how dental disease is distributed across a population, combined with variations in individual risk, "casts doubt on the appropriateness of assigning a 'fixed and universal' recall interval (e.g. six months) for all patients."

What the review supports instead is an interval set for the individual. It quotes the guidance issued in England and Wales by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, under which the interval between oral health reviews "should be determined specifically for each patient and tailored to meet his or her needs, on the basis of an assessment of disease levels and risk of or from dental disease."

Two things need saying plainly about how far this evidence reaches. The trial underlying the review was conducted in UK general dental practice within the National Health Service, so it is not Australian guidance and the funding and service context differs. And it enrolled adults aged 18 and over, so it says nothing about how often a child should be seen. What it does establish is that the universal six-month rule rests on weaker evidence than its ubiquity implies, and that the right interval is a clinical judgement about you rather than a number that applies to everyone.

Source: Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Recall intervals for oral health in primary care patients, pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov (accessed 3 November 2026).

What did the trial actually find?

The main trial in the review, known as INTERVAL, was a randomised controlled trial across 51 dental practices in the UK, enrolling 2372 adults and following them for 4 years. Patients were assigned to a six-month interval, a 24-month interval, or a risk-based interval that was individualised using the NICE process, with the recommendation that "the recall interval range for adults should vary from 3 to 24 months, based on risk."

Comparing the risk-based approach against a 24-month interval, the review's graded conclusions were that assignment to a risk-based interval "probably results in little to no difference in the prevalence of moderate to extensive caries" over four years, assessed as moderate-certainty evidence; and that it "results in little to no difference in gingival bleeding", and "little to no difference in oral-health-related quality of life", both assessed as high-certainty evidence.

That is a genuinely useful result, and also a limited one. It compares a risk-based interval with a long fixed interval in one trial, in one health system, among adults who were already attending a dentist.

Why can a shorter interval carry a cost as well?

It is easy to assume more frequent visits can only help. The review sets out why the trade-off runs in both directions.

Against longer intervals, it notes they "may reduce iatrogenesis and short-term resource consumption but may also compromise oral health by reducing the frequency of the delivery of preventive advice and delaying the diagnosis of dental disease, thereby resulting in more extensive and costly care." Problems found late are usually bigger problems.

Against shorter intervals, the review observes that they "may also increase the potential for iatrogenic over-diagnosis and over-treatment" — in other words, the more often a mouth is examined, the more opportunities there are to treat something that would never have caused trouble.

This is the honest case for an individual interval rather than a default one. Someone with active decay, gum disease, a dry mouth, a high-sugar diet, a smoking history or a complicated restorative history has a different risk profile from someone with none of those, and the sensible interval differs accordingly. It is also why an interval is revisited rather than fixed for life: the review describes the risk-based approach as including review of the interval's appropriateness at the following check-up, and adjusting or maintaining it.

One element the review notes should be part of every routine examination regardless of interval: it records that "an examination for oral cancer, including a thorough medical and social history and a systematic examination of the oral mucosa, should form an integral part of all routine dental examinations."

Frequently asked questions

Do I need a check-up if my teeth feel fine?

Yes, it is still worthwhile. Many dental problems, including early decay and gum disease, cause no symptoms at first. A regular check-up helps us find them while treatment is simpler.

How long is a check-up appointment?

A comprehensive check-up generally takes between 30 minutes and one hour, depending on your needs and whether a clean and X-rays are included. Tell us if you need extra time.

Is an oral cancer screening included?

Yes. Screening of the soft tissues of your mouth, tongue, lips and throat is part of a comprehensive examination and takes only a couple of minutes.

Can I bring my children?

Yes. Children are welcome, and eligible children may be bulk billed under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule. See our children's dentistry page.

What if I am nervous about the dentist?

Please tell us when you book. Our team will explain each step before we start and go at a pace that suits you.

Is the six-month interval an evidence-based rule?

Not as a universal rule. A Cochrane systematic review on recall intervals states that patients have traditionally been encouraged to attend at six-month intervals irrespective of their risk of dental disease,

and that "there is, however, a weak evidence-base underpinning this recommendation." The review supports an interval set for the individual patient, based on an assessment of disease levels and risk, rather than one figure applied to everyone. The interval appropriate for you is a matter for your dentist to assess.

Does that mean I should come in less often?

It does not follow, and nothing here should be read as advice to stretch your own interval. The review found little to no difference on several measures between a risk-based interval and a 24-month interval among adults in one UK trial, but it also notes that longer intervals can delay diagnosis and lead to more extensive and costly care. Risk differs between people and changes over time, which is why the interval is reviewed at each visit rather than set once.

Where was this evidence gathered?

In UK general dental practice. The main trial ran across 51 practices in the UK within the National Health Service, enrolled 2372 adults and followed them for 4 years. It is not Australian guidance, and because it enrolled adults aged 18 and over it says nothing about how often children should be seen.

Can visiting too often be a problem?

The review raises it as a genuine trade-off, noting that short recall intervals "may also increase the potential for iatrogenic over-diagnosis and over-treatment". The argument for an interval matched to your own risk is that it avoids both failure modes: treatment that comes too late, and treatment that was never needed.

Should an oral cancer check be part of a routine examination?

The Cochrane review records the recommendation that an examination for oral cancer, including a thorough medical and social history and a systematic examination of the oral mucosa, should form an integral part of all routine dental examinations.

Related services and further reading

General dentistry
No-gap dental check-up
Dental hygiene
Fillings and restorations
General tooth extraction
Wisdom tooth extraction
Emergency dentistry
Children's dentistry
Dental payment plans
Understanding your treatment

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free payment plans.

HICAPS on-site claiming and bulk billing for eligible children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online through coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday mornings, Sunday closed
Clinics	Find your nearest practice

Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is general in nature and is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

What does a Core Dental check-up include?

A comprehensive check-up at Core Dental includes a clinical examination of teeth, gums, soft tissues and bite, imaging where appropriate, a scale and clean, an oral cancer screening and a treatment plan explaining your options.

How long does a check-up take at Core Dental?

A full examination at Core Dental generally takes between 30 minutes and one hour, depending on your needs and whether imaging and a professional clean are included. Tell our team if you need extra time.

How often should I book a check-up at Core Dental?

Many of our patients attend every six months for routine preventive care. Your Core Dental dentist may recommend a different interval based on your own oral health risks, history and any treatment in progress.

Does Core Dental take X-rays at a check-up?

Where clinically appropriate, we take two to four bitewing X-rays to check for decay between teeth and bone loss. Our dentists may also recommend a panoramic X-ray (OPG) to assess wisdom teeth, jaw joints and bone levels.

Who performs the scale and clean at Core Dental?

Our dental hygienists and therapists at Core Dental carry out scale and clean appointments, removing calculus above and below the gum line, polishing and applying fluoride where advised, and showing you home care.

What are Core Dental's published check-up fees?

As at September 2026, Core Dental published a New Patient Welcome Pack at $175, with an OPG extra at $130 if required, and a New Patient Complete Exam and Clean at $295. Please confirm current prices with your clinic.

Where can I book a check-up with Core Dental?

You can book at any of our nine Core Dental clinics: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside or Glenferrie. Call 13 13 16 or book online at coredental.com.au.

What are Core Dental opening hours for check-ups?

Core Dental clinics are open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings, closed Sundays. Bayside opens Saturdays from 8.30am. Call 13 13 16 to find a time that suits you.