Dental Hygiene and Professional Cleans | Core Dental

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

Details:

Dental hygiene is the care that keeps your gums healthy and helps prevent decay and erosion. At Core Dental our dental hygienists and therapists provide professional cleaning, check the health of your gums and teach you how to look after your mouth between visits. Hygiene appointments sit alongside your dentist's check-ups at our practices across Melbourne. What you need depends on an examination of your mouth, and results vary for each person.

What is dental hygiene?

Dental hygiene is the practice of keeping the gums healthy and preventing conditions such as tooth decay and erosion. It combines your own daily habits, such as brushing, cleaning between your teeth and the foods you choose, with professional care from a dental hygienist. Both matter throughout your life, because home care alone cannot remove every deposit from your teeth.

What does a dental hygienist do?

A hygienist is a dental clinician who focuses on gum health and the prevention of dental disease. Our hygienists carry out professional dental cleaning and teach you ways to improve and maintain good oral health. Dental hygienists typically hold an Advanced Diploma or a Bachelor of Oral Health, and their training centres on prevention. They assess the condition of your gums, teeth and mouth and suggest ways to help prevent oral disease.

Our team page lists these hygienists and therapists: Alexis Martinez, Isabelle Sayers, Sina Hassani, Lexcel Macabuag and Sarah Van Eyk. Hygienists are not dentists or dental specialists, and they work with our dentists on your treatment plan.

Which services does our hygiene team provide?

Professional oral health care with our hygienists can include:

Scaling and cleaning, which removes plaque and calculus (tartar) from the surfaces of your teeth using ultrasonic devices and hand instruments.

A gum health assessment, which looks at the tissues that support your teeth, including the gums, ligaments, bone and outer root surfaces.

Pocket depth charting, which measures the spaces around each tooth to help identify gum disease.

Personalised oral hygiene coaching, with guidance on brushing and flossing techniques that suit you.

Why should you see a hygienist as well as your dentist?

We recommend seeing a hygienist regularly as well as your dentist. Over time, calculus builds up on your teeth, both above and below the gum line, in the natural pocket around each tooth. Brushing and

flossing cannot remove calculus, so a professional clean is needed to take it off.

Left in place, particularly below the gum line, calculus can contribute to gingivitis, which is inflammation of the gums, and to periodontitis, which is advanced gum disease involving loss of the bone that supports teeth. Many dental diseases are preventable. A visit about every six months is a common recommendation, and your hygienist or dentist will advise an interval that suits your own risk. Your oral health can also affect your general health, so it is worth keeping it in check.

What happens during a dental hygiene appointment?

At the start of your appointment your hygienist makes an initial assessment of your teeth and gums and addresses any concerns you have. They discuss their findings and explain what comes next, whether that is continuing your home routine or arranging treatment.

The clean itself follows these steps:

Calculus is removed with an ultrasonic device, which is accompanied by a gentle flush of water to rinse the gums and remove bacteria.

Your hygienist uses hand instruments to remove finer calculus particles.

Once the calculus has been cleared, your teeth are polished with a handpiece and polishing paste.

After a rinse, you are given a fluoride treatment.

If your hygienist finds signs of more complex gum disease, they will talk to you about seeing your dentist, and a registered periodontist where appropriate. You can read about that on our periodontist page.

How can you look after your oral health between appointments?

Your hygienist will give you detailed tips for home. A good routine starts with brushing at least twice a day and cleaning between your teeth once a day.

Brush morning and night for about 2 minutes, using a gentle circular motion or an electric toothbrush.

Brushing alone does not reach the plaque and food debris between your teeth, so floss once a day. Hold the floss between your thumbs and forefingers and work it gently between two teeth with a sawing motion that reaches just below the gum line. Be careful not to be rough with the floss, as it can damage your gums.

Interdental brushes, such as Piksters, can reach areas your toothbrush cannot and help dislodge food and debris.

Choose balanced meals that are low in sugar and acid, and limit snacking, to help prevent decay.

Your hygienist can show you the right way to brush or floss if you are unsure and will build a preventive approach around the condition of your mouth and your areas of concern.

How much does a hygiene appointment cost, and how can you pay?

Fees depend on the time needed and what your mouth requires, so we explain the plan and quote before treatment starts. HICAPS claiming is available on-site, and any rebate depends on your own health fund cover. We also offer interest-free payment plans through Payright for amounts up to $20,000 over 3 to 30 months with fortnightly repayments, subject to eligibility and approval. These terms were published as at September 2026, so please confirm them when you book.

Where can you see a hygienist at Core Dental?

Hygiene appointments are available across our practices. Our team page and clinic pages list hygienists at Caroline Springs (Alexis Martinez, Sarah Van Eyk and Lexcel Macabuag), Epping (Sina Hassani) and Berwick (Isabelle Sayers). Hygiene is also listed on our Southbank , Bayside and Glenferrie pages. Call 13 13 16 and we will tell you which practice suits you and who is available.

Where does fluoridated water fit into looking after your teeth?

Most of Melbourne's drinking water is fluoridated, and it does part of the work that would otherwise fall to your toothbrush. It is worth knowing what that measure does and does not do.

The National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Government body that reviews health evidence, describes the measure in plain terms: "community water fluoridation is the adjustment of fluoride in drinking water to reach a level that can help to reduce tooth decay." Its assessment is that "in Australia, community water fluoridation programs are considered a safe and effective way of reducing tooth decay across the population."

NHMRC completed a review of the research in 2016 and published its current public statement in 2017, which replaced its earlier 2007 Public Statement. The conclusion it reached was twofold: NHMRC "confirmed that community water fluoridation helps to reduce tooth decay, and that there is no reliable evidence that water fluoridation at current Australian levels causes health problems."

The scale of the change over time is considerable. NHMRC states that "in Australia, dental health has improved since water fluoridation began in the 1950s", and that "compared to their parents' generation, Australians born after 1970 (when the majority of water fluoridation programs commenced in Australia) have about half the level of tooth decay." That comparison comes from Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data, which NHMRC cites.

The important qualification is that fluoridated water is one measure among several, not a substitute for the rest. NHMRC's own framing puts it alongside the others: "along with a combination of healthy diet, good oral hygiene, appropriate use of fluoridated toothpaste and regular dental check-ups, water fluoridation is an effective public health measure to prevent tooth decay."

Four things, in other words, and drinking tap water is only one of them. Fluoridated water does not remove plaque, does not clean between teeth, and does not treat gum disease — which is precisely why the hygiene appointment and the daily routine still matter.

Source: National Health and Medical Research Council, Health effects of water fluoridation, nhmrc.gov.au (accessed 3 November 2026).

Why is prevention treated as a public health priority?

Because of how common the condition is, and what it does to people day to day.

NHMRC describes tooth decay as "one of the most common health problems in Australia". Its account of the consequences is unglamorous and accurate: decay "can cause pain, difficulty eating and sleeping, and may make people feel unhappy about their appearance."

Those three effects are a reasonable summary of why hygiene care exists. Pain is the one that brings people in. Difficulty eating and sleeping is the part that quietly erodes how someone functions for weeks before they do anything about it. And the effect on how a person feels about their own appearance is the reason many patients describe relief after treatment in terms that have nothing to do with teeth.

There is also a sequencing point worth making. Decay and gum disease both develop over long periods and are substantially preventable, which means the least expensive and least invasive version of your dental care is almost always the version that happens before symptoms appear. That is the argument for a hygiene appointment that feels, at the time, as though nothing much needed doing.

Frequently asked questions

How often should I have a professional clean?

A visit about every six months is a common recommendation. Your hygienist or dentist may suggest a different interval based on your gum health, your history and your risk of decay.

Does a hygiene appointment hurt?

Most people find a professional clean comfortable, although sensitive teeth or inflamed gums can make it tender. Tell your hygienist how you feel, and they can adjust their approach.

Can brushing and flossing remove tartar?

No. Calculus, also called tartar, is hardened plaque and cannot be removed by brushing or flossing. It needs to be removed by a hygienist or dentist with professional instruments.

What is the difference between a hygienist and a dentist?

A hygienist focuses on gum health and preventive care, including professional cleaning and home care coaching. A dentist diagnoses and treats dental conditions. They work together in our practices.

What should I bring to my first hygiene visit?

Bring your health fund details and a list of any medicines you take. Tell us about any concerns, such as bleeding gums or sensitivity, when you book.

Is fluoridated tap water safe?

The National Health and Medical Research Council reviewed the research in 2016 and published its current public statement in 2017. It confirmed that community water fluoridation helps to reduce tooth decay, and that there is no reliable evidence that water fluoridation at current Australian levels causes health problems.

If my water is fluoridated, do I still need fluoride toothpaste?

NHMRC treats them as separate parts of the same combination, not alternatives. Its position is that water fluoridation is effective "along with a combination of healthy diet, good oral hygiene, appropriate use of fluoridated toothpaste and regular dental check-ups". Fluoridated water does not remove plaque or clean between teeth, so it does not replace a daily routine. What is appropriate for you, including toothpaste strength, is worth confirming with your dentist or hygienist.

How much difference has fluoridation made in Australia?

NHMRC states that dental health in Australia has improved since water fluoridation began in the 1950s, and that Australians born after 1970 have about half the level of tooth decay of their parents' generation. NHMRC cites Australian Institute of Health and Welfare data for that comparison.

Is tooth decay really that common?

NHMRC describes tooth decay as one of the most common health problems in Australia, and notes that it can cause pain, difficulty eating and sleeping, and may make people feel unhappy about their appearance.

Related services and further reading

General dentistry

Dental check-up

No gap dental check-up

Fillings and restorations

General tooth extraction

Periodontist

Dentists and registered specialists

Dental payment plans

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.

Interest-free payment plans and HICAPS on-site claiming.

Dental hygienists and therapists working alongside our dentists.

Call 13 13 16 or book online.

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 8.00am to 1.30pm (Bayside Saturday 8.30am to 1.30pm), 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 is dental hygiene at Core Dental?

At Core Dental, dental hygiene means keeping your gums healthy and preventing decay and erosion. Our hygienists provide professional cleaning and coach you on brushing and flossing, while you look after your teeth daily at home.

What services do Core Dental hygienists provide?

Our hygienists provide scaling and cleaning with ultrasonic devices and hand instruments, gum health assessment, pocket depth charting to identify gum disease, and personalised coaching on brushing and flossing techniques.

Who are the dental hygienists at Core Dental?

Core Dental's team page lists Alexis Martinez, Isabelle Sayers, Sina Hassani, Lexcel Macabuag and Sarah Van Eyk as dental hygienists and therapists. Call 13 13 16 to ask who is available at your nearest practice.

What qualifications do dental hygienists have?

Dental hygienists typically hold an Advanced Diploma or a Bachelor of Oral Health. Their training focuses on preventive care, including assessing the gums, teeth and mouth. Our hygienists at Core Dental work alongside our dentists.

Why does tartar need a professional clean?

Tartar, also called calculus, is hardened plaque that builds up above and below the gum line. Brushing and flossing cannot remove it, so our Core Dental hygienists remove it using ultrasonic devices and hand instruments.

What happens at the end of a Core Dental hygiene clean?

After calculus is removed, our hygienist polishes your teeth with a handpiece and polishing paste. After a rinse, you receive a fluoride treatment, and your hygienist gives you tips for home care that suit your mouth.

Can I pay for a Core Dental hygiene visit over time?

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free Payright plans for amounts up to $20,000 over 3 to 30 months, subject to eligibility and approval. HICAPS claiming is available on-site at Core Dental. Terms published as at September 2026.

How do I book a hygiene appointment at Core Dental?

Call Core Dental on 13 13 16 or book online through coredental.com.au. Tell us you would like a hygiene appointment and any concerns, such as bleeding gums, and we will arrange a time at a suitable practice.