Multilingual Dental Care in Melbourne | Core Dental

Canonical:
https://www.coredental.com.au/multilingual-dental-care-how-core-dental-serves-melbournes-diverse-communities/

Details:

At Core Dental we want you to understand your diagnosis, your treatment options and the risks and benefits before you agree to any treatment. Melbourne is a culturally diverse city, and many of our patients are more comfortable speaking about their health in a language other than English. Our teams speak a range of languages across our nine clinics, and we will accommodate your language preference where we have that capability at your clinic. Let us know when you book.

Why does language matter in healthcare?

Healthcare communication is different from most other kinds of communication. When a clinician explains a diagnosis, a treatment plan, the risks and benefits of a procedure or the instructions for recovery, the stakes are high. If something is misunderstood, or not understood at all, it can lead to poor decisions, unwanted outcomes, or a patient who nods along without having understood what they have agreed to.

Informed consent is a legal and ethical requirement in Australian healthcare. It requires that a patient understands what is being proposed, what the alternatives are and what the risks and benefits are, and that they have genuinely agreed to go ahead. The word that matters is "informed". Consent obtained through a language barrier, with simplified language and a hope that it is enough, may not be fully informed.

How do language barriers affect dental anxiety?

Dental anxiety is common among patients who communicate fluently in English. For people who are settling into a new country, a new healthcare system and a language they are still learning, the added stress of not fully understanding what is happening, or feeling unable to ask the questions that matter, can add to that anxiety.

When you can speak to your dentist in your own language, the appointment can feel different. You can ask the questions you actually have, rather than only the ones that survive translation. You can describe your pain more accurately, voice your concerns and understand the explanation you receive. We would like your appointment to feel like a conversation rather than a transaction. Our articles on fear of going to the dentist and managing dental anxiety before your next treatment have more ideas that may help.

Which languages do our teams speak?

Our teams collectively speak a range of languages across our clinics. They include Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic, Greek, Italian, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Sinhala, as well as other European and African languages, and the list is not limited to these. The languages available differ from clinic to clinic and from day to day, because they depend on which team members are rostered. For example, our Caroline Springs team lists English, Arabic, Bengali and Farsi,

and our South Melbourne team lists English, Mandarin Chinese and Malay.

When we build our teams, language ability and cultural understanding are valued as part of how we care for patients, and our clinics draw on team members whose backgrounds reflect the communities around them. If language support is important to you, please tell us when you call. We will match you with a suitable team member or confirm whether we have the capability to assist in your preferred language at the clinic you choose.

What does cultural sensitivity involve beyond language?

Language is the most visible part of inclusive healthcare, but it is not the whole picture. Cultural sensitivity also means understanding that people may have different attitudes toward health and the body, different expectations about family involvement in medical decisions, and different levels of familiarity with the Australian healthcare system. It can also include different cultural norms around expressing pain, eye contact, physical touch and the relationship between patient and clinician.

A patient from a background where questioning a health professional's recommendation is seen as disrespectful may not voice concerns they genuinely have. A patient who is unfamiliar with how healthcare works in Australia may not know that they have options, that a second opinion is acceptable, or that they can take a written treatment plan home to think about it. Many of our team members share cultural backgrounds with the people they see, and we encourage every member of our team to create space for questions, so that you feel heard as an individual.

How do we approach informed consent at Core Dental?

We take informed consent seriously. Before treatment begins, we explain what is proposed, what alternatives exist, what the procedure involves and what you can expect. We want that explanation to be understood, not simply delivered in English to someone who is nodding politely. Where a team member can explain a treatment plan in your preferred language, it may be easier for you to ask questions, weigh your options and feel confident about what will happen and what you need to do at home.

You are always welcome to ask for more time. At Core Dental we quote before treatment starts, and a written treatment plan lets you review the stages, the number of appointments and the payment arrangements before you decide. You can read more about this in our article on understanding your treatment .

How can we support recent arrivals and new communities?

Melbourne continues to welcome migrants, refugees and international students from across the world. For many new arrivals, finding their way through the Australian healthcare system, including dental care, is one of the early challenges of settling in. The cost structure, referral pathways, health fund options, Medicare arrangements and the relationship between general and specialist dental care may all be unfamiliar.

Team members who have their own migrant backgrounds understand that challenge from personal experience. Our team can explain how a dental visit works, how health funds and HICAPS on-site claiming work, and how bulk billing for eligible children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule works. Eligibility rules are set by Services Australia, so please check your family's eligibility. You can read more in our guide to the Child Dental Benefits Schedule and bulk billing . We also offer interest-free payment plans, and our article on how Core Dental makes dental care affordable explains the terms.

How should you ask for language support when you book?

Here are some simple steps that help us look after you:

Tell us your preferred language when you call 13 13 16 or book online.

Let us know which clinic is convenient for you, so we can check what language support is available there.

If you would like a family member or friend with you, tell us when you book so we can plan the appointment.

Bring a list of your medicines and any medical information to share at your first visit.

Ask us to slow down, repeat or write down anything you would like to take home.

Our first appointment article explains what to expect at your first Core Dental appointment .

Why do we welcome patients from every community?

Every Melbourne suburb has its own character. Every community has its own languages, cultural patterns, health needs and concerns. We have built our teams to reflect that diversity, because we believe healthcare should meet people where they are. If you have felt hesitant about dental care because of language or cultural concerns, please reach out. There is a good chance someone on our team can speak with you in your preferred language, understand your background and help make your visit comfortable.

How can you plan your care and make an informed decision?

A useful first step is to tell us about your concern, symptoms, timing and goals when you book. Bring relevant medical information and a list of your current medicines. Our team can then assess your teeth, gums, bite and surrounding tissues, request imaging where it is clinically appropriate, and explain which options suit you.

Ask what the recommended approach is intended to achieve, whether there are reasonable alternatives, what preparation and aftercare involve, and what risks or limitations apply. Treatment time, fees, recovery and maintenance vary with the diagnosis and the complexity of care. At Core Dental we quote before treatment starts, and a written treatment plan can help you compare stages, expected appointments and payment arrangements before you proceed.

Call 000 immediately for uncontrollable bleeding, breathing or swallowing difficulty, serious facial injury or other life-threatening symptoms. Do not wait for a dental appointment in these situations. For severe tooth pain or swelling without these emergency signs, contact your dental practice promptly. For routine care, prevention and review intervals should be tailored to your individual oral health risks rather than assumed to be the same for everyone.

How can we help?

If you would like to book a visit or ask whether we can support your language needs, our team can help at any of our nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne. Call 13 13 16 or book online, and tell us your preferred language. You can also read about our dentists and registered specialists .

Frequently asked questions

Can I be seen by a dentist who speaks my language?

Often we can arrange it, but it depends on the clinic and the team rostered on the day. Please tell us your preferred language when you call 13 13 16 or book, and we will confirm what we can offer at your chosen clinic.

Which languages are spoken at Core Dental?

Our teams speak a range of languages, including Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu, Arabic, Greek, Italian, Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Sinhala. The mix varies between clinics, so please check when you book.

Why is informed consent important in dental care?

Informed consent means you understand the proposed treatment, the alternatives, and the risks and benefits before you agree. If a language barrier gets in the way of understanding, it is reasonable to ask for more explanation or more time.

Can I bring a family member or friend to my appointment?

Yes, you are welcome to bring someone to support you. Please mention it when you book so we can plan the appointment, and let your dentist know if you would like them to join the discussion about your treatment.

I am new to Australia. Can you explain how dental care and health funds work?

Yes. Our team can explain how a dental visit works, how HICAPS claiming with your health fund works and how the Child Dental Benefits Schedule applies to eligible children. Please ask when you book.

Related services and further reading

Understanding your treatment

What to expect at your first Core Dental appointment

Fear of going to the dentist

Child Dental Benefits Schedule and bulk billing

How Core Dental makes dental care affordable

Our dentists and registered specialists

Children's dentistry

General dentistry

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.

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 8.30am to 1.30pm), Sunday closed
Clinics	Southbank , South Melbourne , Caroline Springs , Carrum Downs , Epping , Wyndham , Berwick , Bayside , Glenferrie

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.

Does Core Dental offer dental care in languages other than English?

Yes. Our teams at Core Dental speak a range of languages across our nine clinics. Availability varies by clinic and roster, so tell us your preferred language when you book and we will confirm what we can offer.

How do I request a dentist who speaks my language?

Call Core Dental on 13 13 16 or book online and mention your preferred language and preferred clinic. Our team will match you with a suitable team member or confirm whether we can assist in that language.

Which languages are listed for Core Dental Caroline Springs?

The Core Dental Caroline Springs team lists English, Arabic, Bengali and Farsi. Language availability depends on who is rostered, so please check when you book.

Which languages are listed for Core Dental South Melbourne?

The Core Dental South Melbourne team lists English, Mandarin Chinese and Malay. Language availability depends on who is rostered, so please check when you book.

Why does language matter for dental consent?

Consent needs to be informed, meaning you understand the treatment, the alternatives and the risks and benefits. At Core Dental we explain each step and welcome questions, and we can offer more time if you need it.

Can Core Dental explain Medicare and health fund arrangements to new arrivals?

Yes. Our team at Core Dental can explain how a visit works, how HICAPS health fund claiming works and how bulk billing for eligible children under the Child Dental Benefits Schedule applies.

What payment options does Core Dental offer?

Core Dental quotes before treatment starts and offers interest-free payment plans. Terms depend on the provider and eligibility, so please ask our team to explain your options when you book.

What are Core Dental opening hours?

Core Dental clinics are open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm, with Bayside opening on Saturdays from 8.30am. Clinics are closed on Sunday.