



**IT'S FREE  
AND IT'S  
ALL GOOD!**

let's  
talk  
teeth

**Under 18?**

**No matter where you're at ...  
high school, training course,  
work or unemployed ...  
you can receive**

**FREE dental care every year**

**and give yourself something  
to smile about!**

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a light blue sweater, is smiling and pointing towards the text on the right. The background is a vibrant pink with decorative swirls and floral patterns.

# WHAT'S THE DEAL?

No matter where you're at ...  
high school, training course,  
work or unemployed ...  
you can receive **FREE** dental care  
every year until your 18th birthday!

## WHAT FREE DENTAL CARE WILL I GET?

- ✓ A yearly check-up.
- ✓ X-rays if necessary.
- ✓ Cleaning to remove plaque, staining and tartar.
- ✓ Fillings for teeth that have tooth decay (holes).
- ✓ Extractions to remove teeth that have been badly affected by tooth decay.

# WHY GO FOR A CHECK-UP?

**Having a healthy mouth  
and an attractive smile  
can improve your  
confidence and self-esteem.**

- ✓ Regular check-ups help you maintain healthy teeth for an attractive smile.
- ✓ Dentists and dental or oral health therapists can give you expert advice about:
  - keeping your teeth, mouth and gums healthy (called oral health)
  - preventing bad breath
  - dental decay and toothache
  - preventing gum disease (gingivitis).
- ✓ Good oral health can also improve your overall health. (Gum disease has been linked with heart and lung diseases and diabetes.)

# WHAT TO DO?

1. To find the oral health therapists/dental therapists or dentists providing free care in your area, call **0800 TALK TEETH** (0800 825 583).
2. Phone or visit your chosen oral health therapist/dental therapist or dentist to make an appointment for a check-up.
3. Turn up for your appointment. Let the receptionist know you are there and who you are. You'll need to fill out an enrolment form when you get there.

It's so easy –  
and you can take a  
support person with you  
if you like!

1 2 3  
**EASY AS!**



# WHICH ORAL HEALTH THERAPIST/DENTAL THERAPIST OR DENTIST SHOULD I GO TO?

Choosing an oral health therapist/dental therapist or dentist is a bit like choosing a hairdresser. You may follow the advice of a mate, health professional or family member – but it's up to you to choose. And it's fine if you want to change to a different oral health therapist/dental therapist or dentist – you'll just need to fill out an enrolment form when you go to your new provider.

Not all oral health therapists/dental therapists or dentists provide the free dental service, so phone **0800 TALK TEETH** (0800 825 583) to check for the free providers in your area.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE DENTAL PRACTICE

Dental practices often have a strange smell. This is from the cleaning products they use to make sure everything is super clean and ultra-sterilised so germs can't spread.

Sometimes you'll hear unusual sounds. These sounds are from the equipment oral health therapists/dental therapists or dentists use to clean and fix your teeth.

Also expect to see oral health therapists/dental therapists or dentists wearing uniforms, gloves and masks. This is to prevent germs from spreading between patients and staff.

A dentist or dental or oral health therapist may provide your dental care. A dental assistant may also be present to help the oral health therapist/dental therapist or dentist.



# WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Check-ups usually take about 15 minutes.
- You will be invited to meet the oral health professional in the consulting room.
- The oral health professional will:
  - check the forms you filled in
  - ask you some questions about your health
  - invite you to sit in the dental chair
  - position a light to shine into your mouth
  - usually provide you with protective plastic glasses to put on
  - use special tools to feel the surfaces of your teeth and around the gum line
  - if necessary, take X-rays of your teeth, to check for decay.
- Just relax and, when asked, open your mouth wide.
- If no decay is found in your teeth and your gums are healthy, your dental care will probably take only one appointment.
- If something needs to be fixed, you may need more than one appointment. The oral health professional will discuss this with you. It is important you go back and finish your treatment to prevent pain or further problems.
- Remember, your dental care is free.

# TIPS FOR HEALTHY TEETH AND GUMS AND FRESH BREATH

- ✓ Be smokefree.
- ✓ Drink water or milk (instead of fizzies, energy drinks and fruit juices).
- ✓ Use a mouthguard when playing contact sports.
- ✓ Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss once a day.
- ✓ Go for a dental check-up every 12 months.

Brushing twice a day and flossing daily removes plaque and bacteria from your teeth and gums and is the best way to prevent bad breath, dental decay and gum disease.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Call 0800 TALK TEETH  
(0800 825 583)
- Talk to your local free oral health therapist/dental therapist or dentist.



# FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call 0800 TALK TEETH  
(0800 825 583)

Or scan the QR code below to find your  
nearest oral health care provider:



Or go to [info.health.nz/services-support/  
dental-care](https://info.health.nz/services-support/dental-care)

Health New Zealand  
Te Whatu Ora



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Government

This resource is available from [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz) or the Authorised Provider  
in your local health district. January 2025. Code HE2399