

# Oral Care for People Under Methadone Treatment

## Dry Mouth?

Drugs containing opium (such as Heroin) will cause dry mouth. As you have had a long-term addiction to heroin in the past, and the fact that methadone is a type of synthetic opiate; you still suffer from the problem of dry mouth even though you are currently under the methadone treatment. Persistent dry mouth not only makes you feel uncomfortable, but also increases your chance of getting severe dental caries.

**To soothe the discomfort of dry mouth and to reduce the chance of dental caries, you should:**

- Drink water frequently to keep your oral cavity moist



- Eat more chewable food to increase your salivary flow
  - Vegetables: Bok choy, choy sum and celery etc.
  - Fruit: Apple, pear and guava etc.
  - Meat: Pork, beef, lamb and chicken etc.



- To encourage chewing, avoid mincing the meat

## Tasteless?

Drugs containing opium and methadone will affect the sensation of taste leading to a loss of appetite. Consequently, you become thin or count on sugary food for quick recovery of energy. However, preference for sugary food will lead to malnutrition and increase in the opportunity of getting dental caries.

### **For good physical and dental health, you should:**

- Limit to three meals a day, which includes the breakfast, lunch and dinner.



- Have a variety of food in each meal to provide sufficient nutrients for your body.
- Eat sufficient amounts at each meal and avoid eating snacks.

### **Toothache?**

Your toothache is caused by dental decay. Taking drugs containing opium suppresses the pain sensation. Therefore you are unaware of the occurrence of dental decay which has been progressing. Now your toothache is indicating that your dental decay has become very severe.

#### **▪ To manage toothache, you should:**

Seek dental treatment as soon as possible. Notify your dentist that you are under methadone treatment so that he will consider appropriate treatment to address your personal need.



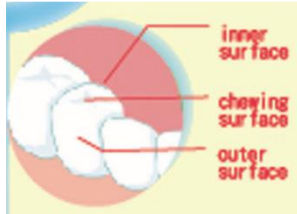
### **Appearance different from that of the past?**

If you find your appearance is changed and is different from before, it may be due to severe dental caries and periodontal disease. Your negligence of oral care and preference for sugary food, in addition to your smoking habit all contribute to the occurrence of the diseases which lead to the loosening and eventually loss of teeth. As a result, your oral muscles lose support and sink in as the number of teeth lost increases, hence a change of your appearance.

#### **To conserve your teeth, you should:**

- Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste in the morning and before bed at night

- Thoroughly clean every surface of the teeth, which includes the outer surfaces, inner surfaces and the chewing surfaces
- Place the toothbrush at an angle to where the gums and the teeth meet. Brush the teeth in group of two to three with a to-and-fro motion and each group for 10 times



- Quit the smoking habit

Treasure your remaining teeth because they help you to chew while eating and help you to pronounce while talking with others. Besides, you will look full and healthy if your oral muscles have the support of the teeth.

**You are advised to:**

1. Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste in the morning and before bed at night
2. Reduce the intake of sugary food

Wishing you dentally and physically fit!