



# Protecting your mouth - all you need to know about tobacco, alcohol, recreational drugs...



**The effects of tobacco, alcohol and recreational drugs on teeth and the mouth include tooth staining, bad breath, dry mouth, sensitivity, tooth loss, gum disease, tooth decay, cracked and broken teeth and oral cancer.**

**As you know, these substances affect your health in general. However, if you do choose to use tobacco, alcohol and recreational drugs, there are ways you can help protect your oral health. You should:**

- Brush your teeth twice a day. Use fluoride toothpaste and a soft bristled (but not shaggy) toothbrush
- Limit 'sugary' foods to mealtimes only (rather than between meals)
- Choose tap water to drink instead of soft drink or sports drinks
- Rinse your mouth with water if you vomit. If possible, rub some toothpaste on your teeth with a finger. Don't use a toothbrush until at least 30 minutes after vomiting
- Rinse your mouth with water after taking any sweet tasting medicine or drug replacement therapy, such as methadone
- Chew sugar-free gum
- Immediately contact a dental professional if you have sores in your mouth that don't heal, or red or white patches on your lips or tongue.

It is a good idea to visit a dental clinic where you can get advice about the above, and also about managing tooth staining.

**If you are a secondary school student, or school leaver under 18 and have a Health Care Card or a Pensioner Concession Card (or parents with one) you can access free dental care at your local Community Dental Clinic.**

Dental Health Services Victoria is the State's leading public dental agency, promoting oral health, purchasing services and providing care to Victorians  
[www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au)

**Call 1300 360 054 for more information,  
or visit [www.dhsv.org.au/findaclinic](http://www.dhsv.org.au/findaclinic)**



dental health  
services victoria