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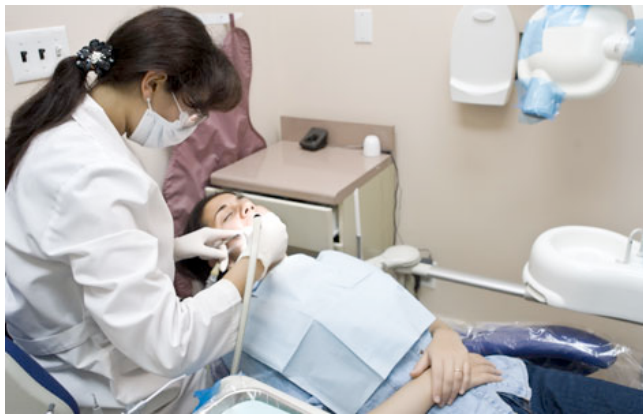
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Have a six-month check to protect against disease

Dec 8 2008 by Laura Caroe, Evening Chronicle

Smiles can turn to frowns if your oral hygiene isn't good. With three out of four UK adults suffering gum disease, brushing and flossing is vital to keep teeth in tip-top condition. LAURA CAROE finds out more.



SIX-month check-ups are becoming a thing of the past as not even half of people in the region see a dentist that often.

Now dentists are urging people to have twice-yearly check ups and to see a dentist if there are any concerns about gum disease.

Leading periodontal specialist Dr Geoffrey Sharpe, who has recently joined the Cosmetic Dental Clinic, in Newcastle, said: "It is surprisingly common.

"Twenty per cent of the adult population have fairly significant disease but as it does not have many symptoms it is hard to pick up.

"Eventually the gums can detach from the side of the teeth and we get a pocket around the edge and then bacteria can get under the gum.

"Then the teeth will get loose and eventually over years they will come out. It is usually from a lack of cleaning.

"Most people are conscientious about cleaning and flossing but unless you have been shown how to do it properly it can be easy to miss areas."

Helen Green, 28, went to see her dentist when her gums became so irritable they were bleeding when she brushed her teeth. She registered with the Cosmetic Dental Clinic and was booked in for a full mouth detox after Dr Darren Cannell discovered she had an infection in her mouth.

The treatment took one day and involved deep cleaning one half of the mouth in the morning and the other half in the afternoon.

Helen, who lives in Newcastle, was under local anaesthetic throughout and given antibiotics to ensure the infection fully cleared up.

She said: "I had never really had any problems with my teeth or gums before but suddenly I was getting some irritation when I was brushing my teeth.

"It was bleeding and I thought I should probably get it checked out. Darren said it was an infection which is quite common but I had to have a mouth detox.

"It was basically just cleaning everything right down into the gums and between the

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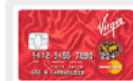
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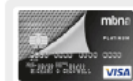
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teeth."

But had Helen not visited within the next few weeks, the infection would have reached the bone which would have been very serious and difficult to resolve.

She added: "Now I do clean more thoroughly and floss every day. The clinic gave me advice about cleaning and cleaning in between the teeth. You don't really ever get taught as a kid how to do it.

"It was quite a serious infection and if I had ignored it might have had some serious consequences. My teeth may have fallen out and that would make anyone feel self conscious."

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