



# Dental information for cardiac surgery

Unless you are wearing dentures, it is important that before your cardiac surgery you visit a dentist to ensure that your teeth and gums are in a healthy state. This is particularly important if you are going to have surgery to the heart valves.

## Why is it important to check that my teeth and gums are healthy before cardiac surgery?

- You don't want to get a painful tooth while you are recovering from surgery.
- Some cardiac conditions may be affected by the dental infections (endocarditis).
- It is sometimes more difficult to carry out dental treatment on patients who have had cardiac surgery.
- You may be taking warfarin which will make removal of teeth more complex.

## How do I obtain dental assessment before my cardiac surgery?

If you have your own general dental practitioner you should make an appointment to be seen **as soon as you are aware** that you are going to have cardiac surgery.

Please let the receptionist know that it is important for you to be seen as soon as possible because of your surgery. If any treatment is required it should be carried out at least 8 weeks before your cardiac surgery.

If you are not registered with a dentist please contact your local practice to register and book an appointment.

## What if I am not dentally fit before my cardiac surgery?

If you are found to have outstanding dental treatment or infections of the teeth or gums before surgery it may be decided to **cancel the surgery until you are dentally fit**.

## Do I need to have this for all types of cardiac surgery?

This is dependent upon the type of surgery you have.

### Coronary artery bypass grafts

There is no reason why you should not receive treatment from your general dental practitioner. It is best to avoid dental treatment for a few months following surgery. By ensuring you are dentally fit before surgery no treatment should be required immediately after surgery.

## Valve replacement

You may require to have antibiotics before certain dental treatments such as cleaning, deep fillings and extractions. Unless you have previously had infective endocarditis your own dentist will be able to give you the appropriate antibiotics. Your treatment may be further complicated by warfarin therapy, which needs special adjustment to ensure that you do not bleed excessively. If you require removal of teeth your dentist will often refer you to a hospital for the tooth to be removed.

## Infective endocarditis

If you have had infective endocarditis in the past you will require to have some of the antibiotics by injection for certain dental treatment. Patients with a history of this are often referred to a hospital for dental treatment.

## Contact

If you have any concerns you would like to discuss with us, please phone us on [REDACTED].

As well as providing clinical care, our Trust has an important role in research.  
This allows us to discover new and improved ways of treating patients.

While under our care, you may be invited to take part in research.  
To find out more please visit: [REDACTED]

Help us prevent the spread of infection in hospital. Please make sure your hands are clean.  
Wash and dry them thoroughly/use the gel provided. If you have been unwell in the last 48 hours please consider whether your visit is essential.

Smoking is the primary cause of preventable illness and premature death.  
For support in stopping smoking contact  
**NHS Smokefree on 0300 123 1044.**

Drinkline is the national alcohol helpline. If you're worried about your own or someone else's drinking, you can call this free helpline in complete confidence.  
**Drinkline on 0300 123 1110.**

For access all patient leaflets and information please  
go to the following address:  
[REDACTED]

**Bristol switchboard: 0117 923 0000**  
**Weston switchboard: 01934 636 363**  
**www.uhbw.nhs.uk**



For an interpreter or signer please contact the  
telephone number on your appointment letter.



For this leaflet in large print or PDF format,  
please email [REDACTED]

