

Do your patients know that alcohol and good oral health don't mix?

The London Tooth Wear Centre is reminding people about the risks of tooth wear due to alcohol this summer.

It has said that patients need to know that alcohol is acidic and therefore highly erosive, especially when consumed frequently, in large quantities over an extended period of time.

It may also be that high alcohol intake occasionally causes vomiting, which will exacerbate the damage to the dentition.

Carbonated drinks, including sugar-free varieties, will have a similar effect on dentition.

Advice

As well as coronal height being reduced, patients may also suffer with hypersensitivity due to the wear.

In such cases, using a fluoridated mouthrinse every day at a different time to toothbrushing is an effective first line of defence.

A desensitising toothpaste and/or prescription fluoride toothpaste can be helpful in alleviating sensitivity, while use of a calcium phosphate paste, applied in carriers, is an additional option if the symptoms are severe.



Also, placing protective covering restorations can eliminate sensitivity and minimise further wear.

Further advice includes:

- Guiding the patient in brushing effectively yet gently with a relatively soft toothbrush and a toothpaste low in abrasivity
- Not swishing drinks around the mouth and waiting an hour after consuming an acidic drink before brushing to avoid damaging the softened enamel
- Rinsing the mouth with fluoride mouthwash or water before or after acidic drink consumption to help limit their erosive potential
- Chewing sugar-free, xylitol- or sorbitol-sweetened gum to help neutralise acid in the mouth.