



Lindley Dental

Caring for your smile



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Our Guide to

Dental Check-ups

What exactly does a dentist do when carrying out a dental examination?

1. Examine the Teeth

The natural tooth substance is examined for signs of decay, any breakages and any signs of wear. Tooth wear can be from acid erosion, over zealous brushing or tooth grinding. Any fillings you already have are checked for marginal seal, wear, breakage, fractures / cracks, discolouration and for any secondary decay around them. Crowns and bridges are checked for a good seal around where they join the tooth, that they are firmly cemented and again for any signs of decay around them.

2. Check the Gums

The dentist then moves on to check your gums. This is very important - no gums means no teeth! Gum problems are often only painful in the late stages; your dentist will notice them sooner than you will. The dentist uses a probe to check that the gums are firmly attached to the teeth. She also looks for any puffiness, bleeding and discharge as these signs can indicate a

problem. Periodically the level of bone in the gums maybe checked using x-rays. The amount of plaque and tartar is also assessed as both these harbour damaging bacteria.

3. Observe the Soft Tissues

The dentist will examine the soft tissues of your mouth – your tongue, floor of mouth and inside your cheek. The dentist is looking for infections, ulcers, precancerous lesions and oral cancer. If picked up early oral cancer can be treated. Your dentist may enquire as to your smoking and drinking habits.

4. Test the Jaw Joint

The dentist checks your jaw joint for amount of opening, any pain, clicks and other noises. If appropriate the dentist will check the muscles that move your jaw.

So there is a bit more to it than just a quick check-up!

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