

Hypodontia

Before



After



This leaflet aims to answer your questions about hypodontia (missing teeth) and the treatments available.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is hypodontia?

Sometimes people do not develop all their teeth. This is called hypodontia. It can affect baby and adult teeth. About one in 20 people have one or two teeth missing, however, more teeth can be missing.

Image to show hypodontia



How can this affect me?

Most people are concerned about the look of their teeth, especially if front teeth are missing and some teeth may be small or pointy. Also, if many teeth are missing, then chewing or speaking may be troublesome.

How do I know that I have hypodontia?

You may have noticed gaps between your teeth and still have your baby teeth. Your teeth may be small and pointy. A dental examination and X-ray investigations are needed to confirm the diagnosis of hypodontia.

Can it be prevented?

At the moment there is no known way to prevent hypodontia from occurring.

Why does hypodontia occur?

Hypodontia often runs in families but people affected do not always pass it onto their children. Sometimes, hypodontia may occur for no known reason or may be part of another condition. The most common of these other conditions affects skin, hair and sweat glands as well as teeth and is called ectodermal dysplasia.

Is there any research being done?

A lot of work is being done to find out more about why it happens and to develop the best treatments possible.

What are my treatment choices?

Many things can be done by your family dentist. They may also ask a team of specialists to consider all the options to help you decide what will be the best treatment for you.

Treatment often involves braces followed by tooth replacement as well as reshaping the teeth to improve their appearance.

Braces

Braces can move teeth to close gaps so that no replacements are needed. Braces can also move teeth to the best position which helps the remaining spaces be filled with a replacement tooth. Please see the pictures below:

Before



During braces



After braces



After tooth replacement



Tooth replacement

There are several types of false teeth, please see the list below:

- **Dentures** - removable false teeth.
- **Bridges** - false teeth fixed to neighbouring natural teeth. Bonding the bridges with a special glue can avoid drilling.

Image to show bridges



- **Dental implants** - false teeth fixed to metal screws placed in the jaw bone. They are not suitable for everyone and can only be used if you have stopped growing.

Tooth reshaping

Pointy teeth can be reshaped with tooth-coloured fillings to improve their appearance

Before reshaping



After Reshaping



Where can I have my treatment?

Your general dental practitioner may do all the treatment or you may need to be referred to a hospital to get specialist help. The specialists may do all the treatment or just give advice.

It is very important that you continue to see your general dental practitioner for regular check-ups.

Funding for dental implant treatment requires approval before treatment can go ahead. Dental implants are also not suitable if you are still growing. If you have any questions please speak to your dentist caring for you.

At the completion of treatment you will return to your own dentist for ongoing care. The specialist team cannot carry out life-long follow-up care.

The dental team

There are several types of dentist who may care for you during your treatment. Below is list of dentists and a description of their roles:

General dental practitioners - help you to keep your teeth clean and healthy, and may build-up and replace teeth.

Restorative dentists - specialise in providing replacement teeth using dentures, bridges or implants for those over the age of 18.

Orthodontists - specialise in the growth and development of jaws and teeth. They use braces to move the teeth into the best possible position.

Paediatric dentists - specialise in caring for people under the age of 16.

Oral surgeons - specialise in removing teeth and placing dental implants. They can also transplant your teeth from one area in your mouth to another area in your mouth.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us:

t: 020 7188 7188 ext. 53946 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

e: hypodontia@gstt.nhs.uk

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit

www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS.

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas'

t: 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

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