



DIRECT ACCESS TO SEE THE DENTAL HYGIENIST

Background

The General Dental Council permits patients to directly access the services of dental hygienists from 1 May 2013. Previously, a dentist had to see a patient prior to prescribing hygiene treatment. This meant that you would have been examined to see whether you had oral problems that warranted further treatment or investigation.

Direct Access

You need to understand the scope of what a dental hygienist does and can't do. A hygienist can see you to provide oral hygiene advice, remove stain, tartar, bacterial deposits, and other debris. In relation to gums, the hygienist can advise you on the progression of gum disease, but more advanced conditions need to be assessed by a dentist, and the hygienist then continues treatment under the prescription of the dentist. Dental hygienists can't diagnose or give the prognosis (the likely outcome) of diseases such as decaying and broken teeth, or prescribe antibiotics, painkillers or any other drugs to alleviate symptoms. Visits to hygienists are not a substitute for full dental examinations.

Referral to dentist

If the hygienist advises you to see a dentist, it is because they feel that it is in the interests of your health, it is outside the scope of what they are allowed to do, or they are uncertain about treating you without further advice. There are very rare circumstances when a hygienist can't start treatment, and before they are prepared to continue, insist that a dentist assesses you. These may relate to your medical history and general health, or the condition of your mouth, which gives them concern.

Consent

I have read and understand the limitations of direct access to a dental hygienist and agree to be treated under the direct access arrangements. I understand that the hygienist is not responsible for the overall health of my mouth and that regular visits to a dentist are still required.

Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	