

# Eating disorders

## Protecting your oral health

Disordered eating behaviours, including restrictive eating, self-induced vomiting, binge eating and starvation, can sometimes cause visible signs within the mouth. Your dentist, as part of your health care team, is here to support you and may ask questions about a possible eating disorder so that they may help you with your oral health, and your overall health and wellbeing. They can additionally provide support through referral to an eating disorder support service.

### The impact of an eating disorder

Eating disorders can have a severe impact on the tissue within the mouth. It is important to discuss with your dentist the proper protection and treatment for your teeth to prevent long term oral health concerns.

Remember, any discussion that you have with your dentist about your oral health is private, between yourself and your practitioner, and will remain confidential.



### For more information

The National Eating Disorders Collaboration (NEDC) provides evidence-based information on the prevention and management of eating disorders, and information about recovery and support services within your state or territory.

[www.nedc.com.au](http://www.nedc.com.au)

### For support

Call the Butterfly National Helpline  
1800 33 46 73

Open 8 am – midnight AEST, seven days a week



### Common signs

- Wearing away of the teeth (tooth erosion) from the acidic stomach contents softening the teeth.
- Weakened and chipped teeth following tooth erosion.
- Teeth can appear darker or more translucent as the white enamel layer is worn away.
- An increase in tooth decay.
- Teeth sensitive to hot and cold temperatures.
- Slow, soft tissue (gums) healing due to a lack of vitamins and minerals.
- Damage to the back of the throat.
- Cracking at the corners of the lips.
- Visible decrease in saliva production.
- A dry mouth.
- Swollen salivary glands.

### Tips for maintaining good oral health

- Stay hydrated by drinking water, preferably tap water containing fluoride.
- Brush your teeth using a higher fluoride toothpaste, available at most chemists.
- Drink water or milk or rinse with a fluoride mouthwash after vomiting, rather than brushing your teeth straight away.

For more information on your dental health visit [ada.org.au](http://ada.org.au)

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