

**May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**Put on a happy face – for National Smile Month!**



Oral health promoters will be out and about during National Smile Month from May 14<sup>th</sup> to June 14<sup>th</sup> putting a smile on the faces of people in South Tyneside, Sunderland and Gateshead.

The team from South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust will be emphasising the importance of mouth care and dental attendance, as well as raising awareness of the effects of alcohol and smoking on the mouth.

To launch and end the month, they will be at South Tyneside District Hospital this Friday (May 11<sup>th</sup>) and on Friday June 15<sup>th</sup>, and they will also hold events at campuses at Gateshead College, South Tyneside College and Sunderland College throughout the month.

Team manager Joanne Purvis said: "A healthy smile is not only a great asset socially but failure to maintain good oral health with basic day-to-day hygiene can be potentially harmful to health. As well as causing direct oral health problems such as gum disease and tooth decay, it can lead to an increased risk of heart attacks, stroke, dementia, complications during pregnancy and male sexual health problems. There is also evidence that smoking and drinking, in particular, can put oral health at risk as they can lead to severe gum disease, which is the main cause of tooth loss in adults and has been linked to a raft of diseases such as strokes, heart disease, diabetes, meningitis, pneumonia and mouth cancer."

The three key messages for developing great oral health are:

- Brush your teeth last thing at night and on at least one other occasion with a fluoride toothpaste
- Cut down on how often you have sugary foods and drinks
- Visit the dentist regularly, as often as they recommend

**South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's oral health promotion team will be at Alexander's restaurant in South Tyneside District Hospital this Friday (May 11<sup>th</sup>) and on Friday June 15<sup>th</sup> 10am – 3.30pm**

**ENDS**

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