

BLUE LIGHT
DENTAL & AESTHETIC CLINIC

THE 5 MINUTE SMILE AUDIT



Dr Sanyukta Kothari ♥

the 10 things your dentist sees that you don't. check each one at home, score it, and know exactly what to do next.

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why I wrote this ♥

NOTHING HURT. SO NOBODY LOOKED.

Most of the big problems I treat were small two years earlier. A filling that could have been a clean. A crown that could have been a filling. A tooth I could have saved.

Nothing hurt. So nobody looked. This guide is the look. Five minutes, at home, with a mirror and your phone. By the end you will know what your mouth is telling you, and what to do about it.

BEFORE YOU START

- ✓ A mirror in good light. Your phone torch, held close.
- ✓ Five minutes. Ten checks, in order.
- ✓ Score each one **0** (I do not see this), **1** (sometimes, or not sure), **2** (yes, clearly).
- ✓ Take one photo of your smile today and keep it.



1 DO YOUR GUMS BLEED?

Look for. Pink in the sink after brushing. Blood on the floss. Red or puffy gum edges.

What it usually means. Inflamed gums. Gum disease at its earliest stage. It does not hurt, and that is the problem. Early gum disease reverses fully. Late gum disease does not. Bleeding is not a reason to stop flossing. It is the reason to keep going.

What I would do. Clean between your teeth every day for two weeks. Still bleeding? You need a hygienist.

0

Never

1

Sometimes

2

Most days

2 ARE YOUR TEETH GETTING LONGER?

Look for. The gum line has moved down. A darker, yellower band at the neck of a tooth. A small notch there.

What it usually means. Receding gums. The root is showing. Roots have no enamel, so they get sensitive and decay faster. Three usual causes: brushing too hard, gum disease, grinding.

What I would do. Soft brush, light pressure. Get your gums measured. Recession does not grow back, but it can be stopped.

0

No

1

One or two teeth

2

Several teeth

3

DOES YOUR BREATH LAST PAST BREAKFAST?

Look for. Floss between two back teeth and smell the floss. A white or yellow coat at the back of the tongue.

What it usually means. Bacteria on the tongue, between teeth, or in gum pockets you cannot reach. Mints hide it for twenty minutes. A tongue scraper fixes most cases. If it does not, the cause is usually the gums.

What I would do. Scrape your tongue every morning. Clean between your teeth. Still there after two weeks? It is a gum problem.

0

Fresh by breakfast

1

Some days

2

Every day

4

DOES COLD MAKE YOU WINCE?

Look for. A sharp jolt from ice cream, cold air or sweet things. Notice: one tooth, or all of them?

What it usually means. All teeth: worn enamel or receding gums. **One tooth:** a crack, decay, or a leaking filling. One tooth that suddenly goes sensitive needs looking at soon.

What I would do. Sensitive toothpaste helps the first kind. It hides the second. Do not let it.

0

No

1

A little, all over

2

One tooth, sharp

5

ARE YOUR EDGES FLAT, CHIPPED OR SEE THROUGH?

Look for. Biting edges of the front teeth straight across like a ruler. Small chips. Tips that look grey or glassy.

What it usually means. You grind or clench, usually in your sleep. Or acid is thinning the enamel: fizzy drinks, wine, reflux. Enamel does not grow back.

What I would do. A night guard is the cheapest tooth insurance there is. Cut the acid habit.

0

Natural edges

1

Slightly flat

2

Flat, chipped, glassy

6

IS ONE TOOTH A DIFFERENT COLOUR?

Look for. Overall yellow is normal. Look for **one** tooth darker or grey, chalky white patches, or dark lines in the grooves.

What it usually means. One dark tooth is often a tooth that has died, sometimes years after a knock. Chalky patches are early decay. Dark grooves are decay. Whitening toothpaste will not touch any of these.

What I would do. Stain can wait. One dark tooth needs an X-ray. Dark grooves need a filling while it is small.

0

Even colour

1

Some staining

2

One dark tooth or spots

7

DO YOUR OLD FILLINGS HAVE DARK EDGES?

Look for. A grey or black line around a filling. A rough edge your tongue catches on. Food that packs between two teeth every meal.

What it usually means. The filling is leaking and decay is getting in underneath. Fillings last ten to fifteen years on average. A food trap is a gap, and gaps collect decay.

What I would do. Get it checked with an X-ray. Replacing a filling is a small job. Replacing the tooth is not.

0

Clean, or none

1

One edge looks dark

2

Dark edges or a food trap

8

HAVE YOUR TEETH MOVED?

Look for. Lower front teeth overlapping more than they did. A new gap. Compare with a photo from five years ago. Braces as a teenager, retainer long gone?

What it usually means. Teeth move for life. Crowding makes them harder to clean, so they stain and decay at the overlaps and wear unevenly.

What I would do. Nothing urgent. If it bothers you, the fixes range from a retainer to aligners. You see the finished result on a screen before you decide.

0

Same as always

1

A little

2

Clearly moved

9

DOES YOUR JAW CLICK, OR YOUR HEAD ACHE IN THE MORNING?

Look for. A click when you open wide. Tight jaw on waking. Headaches at the temples. Scalloped tongue edges. A partner says you grind.

What it usually means. Clenching or grinding at night, or a bite that does not meet evenly. Linked to check five. It wears teeth, cracks fillings and tires the jaw.

What I would do. A night guard made to fit, and a bite check at your exam. Both simple. The damage they prevent is not.

0

No

1

Sometimes

2

Often

10

THE PHOTO TEST

Look for. Open your last ten photos. Lips closed? Hand near your mouth? Head turned to hide one side? One tooth you always avoid showing?

What it usually means. Nothing clinical. Everything else. This is the thing you have worked around for years. Most people never say it to a dentist, so it never gets fixed.

What I would do. Say it at your exam. There is usually a smaller fix than you think. And there is a right order: gums, alignment, colour, shape.

0

I smile freely

1

I hold back a bit

2

I hide it

the one you cannot see 

"NOTHING HURTS, SO NOTHING IS WRONG"

This is the most expensive sentence in dentistry. Decay between teeth. Decay under an old filling. Gum disease at the back. A crack in a root. **All of them are silent** until they are big. By the time a tooth hurts, the cheap fix is usually gone. Pain is not an early warning. It is a late one.

This is why a proper exam includes **X-rays where they are needed**, usually every one to two years. They show the 40% of each tooth a mirror never will.

add it up //

YOUR SCORE

0 to 4

Good. Keep the routine on the next page. Book a check up when you are due. If it has been over a year, that is now.

5 to 9

Something is starting. Book a check up and a hygiene visit this month. Bring your scores and say which checks scored 2.

10 or more

Do not wait for pain. Book now and ask for a full exam with X-rays.

One rule beats the total. A 2 on check four, six, seven or nine means book regardless. Those four get expensive quietly.

the fix for most of it //

THE FIVE MINUTE ROUTINE

- 1 **Tongue scraper. 30 seconds.** Metal, not a brush. Three strokes. This is most of your morning breath.
- 2 **Between the teeth. 90 seconds.** Floss or small brushes. This is 40% of every tooth. Most people skip it.
- 3 **Brush. 2 minutes.** Bristles at 45 degrees to the gum line. Small circles, light pressure. An electric brush does this for you.
- 4 **Spit. Do not rinse.** Rinsing washes the fluoride away. Let it sit.

THE KIT, NOTHING MORE

- ✓ **Electric toothbrush with a pressure sensor.** The sensor matters more than the brand.
- ✓ **Toothpaste with 1,350 to 1,500 ppm fluoride.** It says so on the tube. Ignore the front.
- ✓ **Interdental brushes, sized by a hygienist.** The wrong size does nothing.
- ✓ **A metal tongue scraper.** Lasts for years.
- ✓ **Fluoride mouthwash, 0.05%, after lunch.** Not straight after brushing.
- ✓ **A night guard made by a dentist,** if you scored on check five or nine.

About £15 a month. The problems it prevents cost thousands. The order matters more than the products.

HABITS THAT CHANGE A LOT

- ✓ **Wait 30 minutes after anything acidic before you brush.** Coffee, juice, wine, fizzy water. Acid softens enamel; brushing then scrubs it off.
- ✓ **Sugar free gum after a meal you cannot brush after.** Xylitol first on the label. Saliva is your best defence.
- ✓ **New brush head every three months.** If it frays sooner, you press too hard.
- ✓ **Dry mouth at night is a risk, not a nuisance.** Tell your dentist.
- ✓ **One coffee beats one coffee sipped all morning.** It is time in acid that counts, not the cup.

FOUR THINGS PEOPLE GET WRONG

"Brush harder, get cleaner"

Hard brushing wears enamel and pushes gums back. Technique beats force.

"Whitening toothpaste whitens teeth"

It removes surface stain. Only a peroxide treatment from a dental professional changes the colour.

"Bleeding gums mean stop flossing"

The opposite. Keep going. It stops in about two weeks.

"If nothing hurts, nothing is wrong"

The most expensive myth of all. See the page before your score.

what good looks like ☆

A PROPER FIRST VISIT

ANY DENTIST SHOULD

- ☐ Ask what **you** want, not just what is wrong.
- ☐ Measure your gums and say the numbers out loud.
- ☐ Take X-rays where needed, and explain why.
- ☐ Scan or photograph your teeth so you see what we see.
- ☐ A written plan, in priority order, with prices. No pressure.

WHY EARLY IS CHEAPER

Caught now A clean and better technique

Six months later A small filling

Two years later A root canal and a crown

Five years later An extraction and an implant

Each step costs roughly **three to ten times** the one before.
Every fee is at bluelightdentalclinic.co.uk/fees.

IF CHECK EIGHT WAS YOU, ASK ANY ALIGNER PROVIDER

- ① Is a **GDC registered dentist** designing each stage?
- ② Will you check my **gums and bone** in person first?
- ③ Who do I call if the aligners **stop fitting**?
- ④ Are **refinements included**? Will I see a **simulation** first?

you read this far

YOUR EXAM IS ON US

Book a **hygiene visit** within 30 days of getting this guide and your **new patient exam is free**. Say "**Smile Audit**" when you book. Bring your score. We start from there.

- ✓ Full examination of every tooth
- ✓ Gum measurements, explained
- ✓ Photos or a 3D scan of your teeth
- ✓ A written plan, in priority order, with prices

FIRST 15 NEW PATIENTS EACH MONTH

CALL OR WHATSAPP

020 8340 0666

Mon to Fri 9 to 5
Sat 9 to 1

BOOK ONLINE

BOOK YOUR VISIT →

Add "Smile Audit" in the
notes

my score: _____ checks I scored 2: _____

New patients only. Exam free when booked and attended with a hygiene visit within 30 days of receiving this guide. First 15 new patients each calendar month. One per person. X-rays, if needed, are discussed with you first. Not exchangeable for cash. Hygiene fees on our website.

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