

DIRECT ACCESS

Consent for direct access treatment with Sarah Tomlinson Dental Hygienist

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 with a dentist then you would see a hygienist after, under prescription from a dentist.

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You need to understand the scope of what a dental hygienist can and cannot do. A hygienist can see you to provide oral hygiene advice, remove stain, soft & hard deposits, treat & diagnose gum disease and advise you on the progression of gum disease, but more advanced conditions need to be assessed by a dentist or a specialist.

Dental hygienists cannot diagnose or give the prognosis 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 with a 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 exceedingly rare circumstances when a hygienist cannot 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.

Sarah Tomlinson

Dental Hygienist

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