Organised by the British Dental Health Foundation, National Smile Month is the UK’s largest oral health campaign. Taking place from 20 May to 20 June 2013, at its most basic level the campaign promotes three key messages, all of which go a long way to improve oral health in the UK. They are:

- Brush your teeth for two minutes twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste;
- Cut down on how often you have sugary foods and drinks;
- Visit your dentist regularly, as often as they recommend.

Established in 1976, National Smile Month is a campaign with oral health at its heart. Last year alone the campaign reached over 40 million people, demonstrating that National Smile Month is going from strength to strength.

The wide spectrum of the campaign provides an opportunity for a large number of healthcare and educational organisations to get involved. Anyone with an interest in good oral health can participate in the campaign.

At the Foundation, we are dedicated to improving oral health and through National Smile Month. By working together we can transform the oral health of those people across the UK who need support and more importantly, provide education about the value of a healthy mouth.

Despite retaining a serious oral health message, National Smile Month 2013 is about having fun and getting people excited about their oral health. Last year the Foundation distributed over 100,000 ‘Smileys’, and they are back in 2013 to bring more fun to the campaign. After all, it takes 43 muscles to frown and only 17 to smile!

With the support of Platinum sponsors Listerine, Wrigley’s Extra and Oral-B, together we look forward to working alongside our partners and thousands of event organisers spreading the message of good oral healthcare not only here in the UK, but worldwide.
Not everyone looks after their oral health. In fact, one in four people still don’t brush their teeth twice a day while four in ten don’t visit their dentist as regularly as recommended. This has led to one in 10 adults suffering from tooth decay and a further two in three having visible dental plaque.

If you’re thinking that doesn’t sound too bad, it’s worth bearing in mind the growing body of evidence suggesting there’s more to poor oral health than meets the eye. Recent studies have linked poor dental health to an increased risk of pneumonia, type-2 diabetes, heart attacks, strokes and complications during pregnancy.

It isn’t all down in the mouth. To coincide with National Smile Month, we’ve seen some great improvements in oral health. The UK is one of the most likely nations in Europe to visit their dentist for a check-up – helping to prevent the battle against poor oral health. The UK was ranked second (72 per cent), after the Netherlands (79 per cent), in a recent survey.

There’s more good news. Over three fifths of adults in England and Northern Ireland (61 per cent and 60 per cent respectively) and over two thirds in Wales and Scotland (both 69 per cent) now attend their dentists regularly. In 1978, the figure was just 44 per cent in England and 39 per cent in Wales.

Getting involved in National Smile Month doesn’t just give you the chance to be a part of the UK’s largest oral health campaign. It gives you the chance to bring oral health to the forefront of the public’s mind.

The success of National Smile Month is down to the enthusiasm, dedication and hard work of event organisers and supporters across the country spreading the Foundation’s key messages to improve oral health.

Our findings into the UK’s attitudes to oral health discovered….

Impact of the economic downturn

- 17 per cent of people are spending less on their oral care
- One in four people (27 per cent) are visiting the dentist less often
- One in four people say visiting the dentist is becoming less of a priority
- 36 per cent of adults say they are likely to delay dental treatment due to cost
- 17 per cent of people say they are changing their toothbrush less often
- One in five people say they are more likely to refuse treatment
- A quarter (27 per cent) of people say they are buying cheaper toothpaste and toothbrushes

Attitudes to oral health care

- 60 per cent of people aged 65 and over regret not looking after their teeth in earlier life
- 67 per cent of 16-24 year olds worry more about their teeth compared to the same age group five years ago

Work and oral health

- 43 per cent of the UK workforce is allowed to take paid time off work to visit their dentist
- 13 per cent of workers have to take time off without pay to visit their dentist
- Nearly three in every ten people (29 per cent) take holiday or visit the dentist in their own time
- 62 per cent of parents say they either took unpaid leave or holiday to take their children to the dentist
- 7 per cent of people say they have had a sick day due to poor oral health in the past five years
- 4 per cent of adults say they have had to take a day off work to look after a child’s tooth problem

*Sources:*

Spicer Road Dental Practice, Exeter

Hygienist Corinne Mccelligott visited four care homes, including the Strand Nursing Home, Starcross. Staff members and residents learned about cleaning their dentures and were also educated about plaque, sore mouth, mouth cancer and diet. National Smile Month smileys and stickers were distributed among 300 children at a local school. All children participated in a brushathon and were taught about good toothbrushing technique and learned about the value of good diet. These children are just a few from around the UK who are learning the value of looking after their teeth, through National Smile Month, which will undoubtedly have a positive effect on their health in the future.

Corinne said: “Spicer Road Dental Practice has especially enjoyed working in care homes for the first time and the staff at the home were extremely grateful for assistance with oral health education.

“Last year the team visited two schools where the children had relatively secure home lives but in 2012 we went to a different school and visited those children who perhaps don’t have such opportunities, and where their dental health education may not be as solid.”

All Smiles at St Marie’s, Rugby

Nearly 500 children at St Marie’s Catholic Primary School and Nursery could barely contain their smiles as part of last year’s National Smile Month. The school had a day of oral health education, with the children unable to resist sinking their teeth into some oral health facts and fun.

Deputy Head at St Marie’s, Jane Price, said: “The day could not have gone any better. We fully recognise the importance of oral health, and the campaign is an excellent opportunity for our children to learn about a subject that may be alien to them.

“The children certainly looked like they were having fun, and the staff managed to crack open a smile too!”
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust supported National Smile Month by running three events out in the community on the Health Bus. The Oral Health Promotion team and colleagues from Oxfordshire Salaried Primary Care Dental Service were talking to members of the public outside the bus, giving out oral health information and advice. A dentist from our service gave free oral health checks to members of the public on board the bus. Representatives from local dental practices also attended, ready to offer NHS dental care at their surgeries to those looking for a dentist.

Over the three health bus events, a total of 61 members of the public received free dental checks, and approximately 250 people received oral health information.

What you think about National Smile Month...

- 97% say National Smile Month is successful in promoting good oral health values.
- The ‘Smiley’ has been met with a 98% approval rating.
- Over 1,500 organisations held National Smile Month events last year.
- More than 99% say they are planning to participate again in 2013.

*British Dental Health Foundation Survey: 2012
Hosting games and competitions, getting children excited, or even rediscovering your own childhood, is a fantastic way to ensure people learn a little more about just how important a healthy smile is. After all, poor oral health isn’t just bad for our mouths but can lead to a number of systemic illnesses and diseases throughout the body.

This year’s campaign will create many more opportunities for supporters, organisations, schools and workplaces to help share the message of how to achieve great oral health. We are looking for people in all corners of the UK who can take our values and passion of oral health education and spread the word among their community. If you would like to be involved in National Smile Month, we would love to hear from you so just get in touch. You will also find lots more campaign information right here, whether you want host an event, fundraise or just learn more about your oral health.

To help you get involved, here are a few ideas to get you started:

**Smileathons**
Get your hands on our ‘Smiles on a Stick’. You can’t help but smile when you’re using them, and they’re a great way to engage others about the importance of oral health.

**Brushathon and the two-minute challenge**
Don’t forget your toothbrush! A sponsored Brushathon and other teeth-brushing challenges are a fun way to follow a healthy dental routine. National Smile Month encourages everyone to brush their teeth for the recommended two minutes, twice a day.

**Engage with local schools**
Education is vital. So we urge you to develop links with local teachers and schedule visits to your local schools and colleges. Many schools include oral health in the curriculum and sessions scheduled for just before half-term are an ideal time for fun and interactive talks to children and students. Look out for our new Education Pack, launched in March, it will be a free resource to help you engage directly with young children in the classroom.

**Hit the High Street**
Some of the best National Smile Month’s events take place outside the practice. Being out in the community is an excellent way to raise awareness of oral health to as many people as possible.

**Open Your Doors**
A dental practice is a fascinating place with its many items of equipment and terminology, particularly for children and newcomers. Why not give people an educational experience and show them how everything works with a series of Open Days?

**Dazzling Displays**
National Smile Month posters are a bright, eye-catching and informative way of brightening your dental practice, and would also be an effective means of promoting the campaign in hospitals, schools, pharmacies, colleges and community centres.

**Food for Thought**
Why not use National Smile Month to promote healthier eating? Make suggestions on what makes a healthy school lunch box; work with schools to promote a healthy tuck shop, or work with businesses to have a healthy canteen for a week; allow people to sample sugar-free sweets and other products; and make suggestions for snacks like cheese and carrots to help care for teeth.

**Our Support**
To support your activities there is an extensive range of National Smile Month products to help you communicate, motivate and educate. We cater for all budgets, and you can choose from campaign products including event and campaign packs, our massively popular Smiley and more to make promoting your activities as easy as possible. All resources are available from the Foundation’s online shop. Simply visit www.dentalhealth.org/shop

Visit @smilemonth and join in the conversation online!
Thank you to the following major sponsors who are helping to make everyone smile in 2013 with their educational grants and generous charitable support.

Platinum Sponsors

**Listerine®** are proud to partner with the British Dental Health Foundation to support National Smile Month 2013. We are dedicated to improving oral hygiene in the UK and think that National Smile Month is a great way to get people thinking about the importance of a good oral hygiene routine.

Every single thing you put into your mouth is covered in germs. There could be as many as seven billion bacteria in your mouth at any one time. That’s so many, that not even brushing can get rid of them all! Brushing may leave your teeth feeling clean, but it doesn’t get rid of all the bad bacteria that have set up home in your mouth. But don’t worry, keeping your mouth at its best isn’t as hard as you may think. LISTERINE® powers through your whole mouth to provide a deep clean in even those hard-to-reach places. It kills up to 97 per cent of germs left behind after brushing, keeping your mouth fresh for up to 12 hours. With a variety of adult mouthwashes, you’re sure to find the Listerine® that suits you.

**Extra** is proud to, once again, be a Platinum Sponsor of National Smile Month in 2013. Extra is committed to helping patients improve their regular oral healthcare routine between brushing, through one extra simple step, by chewing sugarfree gum after eating and drinking.

Independent clinical research proves that chewing sugarfree gum for 20 minutes after eating or drinking helps neutralise the plaque acid attacks that can cause tooth decay. 1 That’s the message we’re passionate about and why we’re working alongside the British Dental Health Foundation and dental professionals to help spread the word.

Recommend chewing sugarfree gum after eating and drinking to your patients, especially when they are on the go or grabbing lunch at their desks. It’s a convenient and enjoyable way to help them maintain their oral health throughout the day in addition to their existing oral care routine. For more information please visit http://www.wrigleyoralhealthcare.co.uk

In 2013 Extra will be celebrating National Smile Month with the launch of a new flavour – Extra White Bubblemint.

**Oral-B** are delighted to be working with the British Dental Health Foundation again in their common aim to improve dental health in the UK. Oral-B sells a range of oral care products including their most recent innovation, Pro-Expert toothpaste. This product’s unique formulation provides benefits, protecting the user against plaque, gum problems, caries, halitosis, calculus formation, staining, dentinal hypersensitivity and enamel erosion. It is not surprising, therefore, that Pro-Expert has been accredited by the Foundation which hailed the development as “the most significant toothpaste launch of the decade”.

Oral-B Pro-Expert toothpaste is a perfect partner to the Company’s flagship power toothbrush, ‘Triumph with SmartGuide’, the only adult powerbrush brand to be accredited by the British Dental Health Foundation. Oral-B applaud the Foundation for their efforts and implore dental professionals, the media and manufacturers to all do their bit to get behind the campaign and promote better oral health.

www.smilemonth.org

Philips is extremely proud to be a sponsor of National Smile Month. As a result of in-depth research, innovation and profession-wide consultation, Philips has made huge inroads into the technology of tooth brushing and its multi award winning sonic toothbrush portfolio has influenced the way powered tooth brushing has evolved over the last 20 years. More recently Philips added greater depth to the science of oral healthcare with the launch of AirFloss - for an easier clean between the teeth - which is accredited by the BDHF.

Bupa is proud to support UK National Smile Month. We’re opening more dental centres around the UK to help more people get high quality, convenient, affordable dental care and treatment. We also provide comprehensive dental insurance for NHS or private patients, with market leading oral cancer cover. Visit [www.bupa.co.uk](http://www.bupa.co.uk) to find out more.

Denplan, the UK’s leading dental payment plan specialist, is proud to yet again support National Smile Month. Denplan helps you to budget and spread the cost of your private dental care, so you don’t need to worry about unexpected dental bills. We have around 6,500 member dentists across the UK already caring for approximately 1.8 million patients.

We continually strive to be at the forefront of innovative preventive dental care. By offering you the very best oral health advice, up-to-date dental knowledge, and the latest techniques through our member dentists, we can help you maintain healthy teeth and gums for life, and avoid potentially costly and invasive dental treatment.

For more information about Denplan, visit the [Denplan website](http://www.denplan.co.uk).

NUK products are developed to give parents peace of mind and to encourage healthy oral development. For this reason, NUK are the only brand to have both teats and soothers approved by the British Dental Health Foundation.

NUK is proud to be an official sponsor of National Smile Month in 2013. See [www.nuk.co.uk](http://www.nuk.co.uk) for more information about NUK products.

Invisalign is proud to be an official sponsor of UK National Smile Month. Invisalign is a clinically recognised, virtually invisible orthodontic treatment that straightens teeth without the embarrassment of traditional fixed braces. For more information about Invisalign, visit [www.invisalign.co.uk](http://www.invisalign.co.uk).
National Smile Month is not just about education, it’s also about having lots of fun. And this year we hope everyone will make each other smile with National Smile Month’s very own ‘Smiley’. They are great fun whether in the workplace, at school, hospitals, dental practices, toddler groups – in fact just about anywhere you can think of.

They are educational too. On the back of each ‘Smiley’ there’s a reminder about how to take good care of your oral health.

We are giving away 15,000 free ‘Smiley’s’!

Simply visit www.smilemonth.org to register

Registering your details will not only allow us to send you your Information Pack, you will also receive special discounts on National Smile Month 2013 Campaign Products.

Do you, or do you know someone who needs advice, information or help to improve oral health?

Our SmileLine service is free and run by qualified dental professionals. Simply call during office hours or drop them an email at helpline@dentalhealth.org.

Don't forget to register for regular updates about National Smile Month at:

www.smilemonth.org