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# Going to the dentist's



entists recommend that you **go for a check-up** at least twice a year. At the same time as you see the dentist, you can also make an appointment with the **dental hygienist** who will clean and **polish** your teeth for you.

The dentist checks that your teeth are in good condition. If you have a hole, or a **cavity**, you may need a **filling**, which is a small amount of **porcelain** that the dentist uses to fill the hole. Many adults have one or more fillings – often in their **back teeth** or **molars**.

You may have more serious problems with your teeth and occasionally the dentist will need to **take an X-ray** to see the damage to your teeth more clearly. For example, a tooth may be so rotten that the dentist recommends an **extraction** (where the tooth is removed) or you may need **root canal work**, where the dentist repairs damage to the roots of a tooth. In both of these occasions, you will need an **anaesthetic** so that you cannot feel the pain. (Unfortunately, you will still be able to hear the sound of the dentist's **drill**, the metal instrument used to open up the tooth.)

Some adults also experience problems with their **wisdom teeth**. There are four of these teeth: two top teeth, and two bottom teeth at the extreme left and right of the mouth. If they don't **come down** properly, they can become painful and need to be removed.

If you fall over and **knock out** one of your **front teeth**, the dentist may be able to fit a **false tooth**. The dentist can also repair teeth which have disintegrated, by putting a **cap** on the tooth, to stop it disintegrating further.

Specialist dentists (called **orthodontists**) can **straighten** teeth which are **crooked**. They put **braces** (wires) on the teeth to do this. Many children need to have this work done.

Finally, "prevention is better than cure". Dentists recommend that you **brush** your teeth twice a day, and **floss** your teeth to remove any food between your teeth. An antibacterial **mouthwash** will help to avoid the build-up of **plaque**.