

# News

## Get rough with tooth wear during National Smile Month

Did you know, that earrings, business cards, keys, matchsticks and screwdrivers are just a few of the somewhat inexplicable objects patients admit to using to remove food particles from between their teeth?

The research comes from the Oral Health Foundation in support of National Smile Month from the 16 May to 16 June.

Putting to one side the hygiene aspect of putting any one of the above objects into mouths, their use is particularly worrying when it comes to the issue of tooth wear, which is a growing problem.

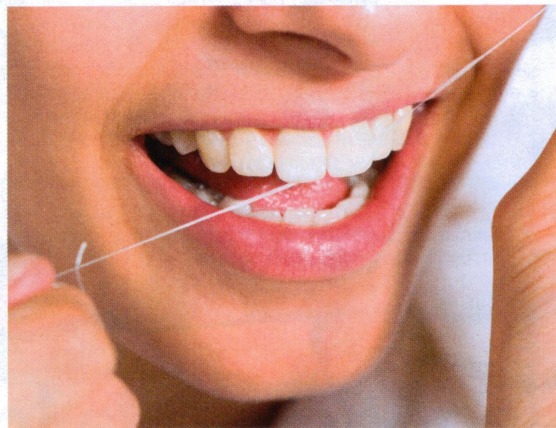
Comparing the most recent *Adult Dental Health Survey* with its predecessor, figures suggest that in just 11 years the incidence of tooth wear in England increased by 10%.

Alongside over-zealous tooth brushing and consuming a diet rough in texture, using utensils not specifically designed for the job of removing food debris interdentally contributes to abrasion.

Patients suffering from tooth wear often experience sensitive teeth, which may look shorter on smiling or when speaking.

Patients also often report that chewing may have become a problem. In addition:

- Teeth may become less white as some of the outer surface is lost
- Front teeth may become sharp or chipped
- Chewing surfaces may wear flat and take on a shiny, pitted appearance
- Restorations such as crowns and bridges may stand proud of the natural teeth.



### How to brush

Since over-enthusiastic tooth brushing can result in abrasion, it is a good idea for the dentist or hygienist to demonstrate how to brush teeth without being too vigorous and, where appropriate, to recommend the use of a soft toothbrush and non-abrasive toothpaste.

It is also worth mentioning to patients that foods with a rough texture will make matters worse.

Finally, making patients aware of the damage inflicted by 'handy' tools for cleaning between the teeth is imperative to stop further damage to the enamel and dentine.