



## Pre-treatment dental checks during the pandemic

During the pandemic, some people are finding pre-treatment check-up appointments with their dentist may be delayed. A pre-treatment dental check can show if any invasive dental procedures such as extractions or implants are needed.

They can also assess the overall health of your mouth and teeth before starting some osteoporosis treatments; the bisphosphonates – alendronic acid, risedronate, ibandronate, zoledronic acid or the monoclonal antibody treatment called denosumab.

A check-up is suggested because invasive dental work can involve some damage to the jaw bone and raise the risk of a very rare condition called osteonecrosis of the jaw (ONJ). You can read more about ONJ [here](#).

With the uncertainty around appointments at the moment, in practice, your doctor may need to weigh up your need for a drug treatment against what is essentially a very low risk of this very rare condition.

If you need a pre-treatment dental check, ask your dentist:

- when they're restarting routine check-ups
- if they can fit you in as a priority.

Most dental practices are beginning to reopen to routine appointments. You may have to wait a bit longer than you're used to if patients who need urgent care are being prioritised.

## Dentists are considered low risk

Your risk of catching coronavirus at the dentist is very low. The benefits you get from an osteoporosis treatment far outweigh this risk.

To help keep you safe, dentists are following strict social distancing measures and practice staff are using protective equipment.

## If you can't get a dental check

Ask your health care professional (HCP) if you can start your osteoporosis treatment without a dental check. They will weigh up your need for drug treatment against what is essentially a very low risk of the condition ONJ and may agree to you starting treatment straight away if you:

- have had regular dental check-ups
- have no new dental issues
- look after your oral hygiene.



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Don't forget that it's still important to see your dentist as soon as you can get an appointment.

Your health care professional may not agree to you starting your osteoporosis treatment without a dental check. If this happens, they might recommend other types of drug treatment (in specific circumstances) as well as a bone-healthy lifestyle which includes eating a healthy, varied, balanced, and calcium-rich diet, not smoking, not being underweight, keeping active and exercising and making sure you're not lacking in vitamin D – the sunlight vitamin which we need to absorb calcium for our bones. Click [here](#) for information on what you can do to help your bones.

Make sure that there is a plan to get your delayed osteoporosis drug treatment prescribed once the dental check occurs and that your treatment isn't delayed indefinitely.

If you want to discuss this further, contact the Specialist Nurse Helpline on our Freephone number 0808 800 0035 or email [nurses@theros.org.uk](mailto:nurses@theros.org.uk)

For more information about dentists and Coronavirus

Call the Dental Helpline at the Oral Health Foundation for free and impartial advice.  
01788 539780 (local rate in the UK)

09:00 to 17:00

Monday to Friday

Find out more about the Dental Helpline <https://www.dentalhealth.org/dentalhelpline>.