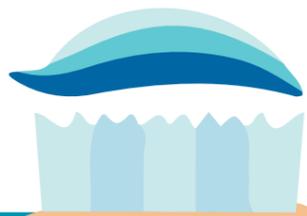


# DENTAL HEALTH

## FOR SWIMMERS: BEST PRACTICE



### 1. Have a regular check up every 6 months.

Tell your Dentist you are an elite swimmer and work with them to plan routine appointments away from major competitions.



### 2. Deal with any dental pain immediately.

Do not ignore pain and wait until your next appointment to address it. In most cases there is a reason for pain and if untreated may progress to a more serious problem. Studies show dental problems are common in elite athletes, and often disrupt training and competition.



### 3. Diet influences Dental Health.

Diets high in sugary foods and sports drinks, can lead to tooth decay and erosion of the teeth.



### 4. Keep your gums healthy. Ensure you clean your teeth thoroughly at least twice daily.

Don't forget to clean in between the teeth with either dental floss, interdental brushes or a water pick. Gums should not bleed when cleaning, bleeding gums are a sign of inflammation and infection. Bleeding gums left untreated can lead to gum disease and may progress to more serious conditions which will significantly impact on performance.



### 5. Be aware of your wisdom teeth.

Wisdom tooth removal is very common. They do not always need to be removed. Ensure your dentist checks their status and advises you on your options. If surgery is required, plan this with your coach and dentist to minimise disruption to training and competition. Do not underestimate the recovery period needed, again work with your coach and dentist to manage pain and healing time. This could mean a good 7 days out of the pool but will vary depending on individual circumstance.



### 6. Check for tooth grinding/bruxism.

Clenching or grinding your teeth during the daytime or at night [bruxism] is not uncommon and may be more common in swimmers than the general population. It may be linked with other pain such as headaches on waking, sore teeth, pain from the jaw joint and also muscle pains around the neck/shoulder area. Discuss with your physio, sports physician and dentist if any of these are issues. A splint or mouthguard can be made by your dentist if needed and worn as to their instructions.

