

Specialist Paediatric Dental Service

Hypodontia



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What is hypodontia?

Sometimes one or more teeth do not develop and are missing. This is called hypodontia and can affect both baby and adult teeth.

Why does this occur?

It is not always known why, but some possible causes of missing teeth include:

- Family history
- Certain developmental conditions (including cleft lip and palate and Down's syndrome).

Is it common?

Hypodontia is quite common, affecting up to 5% of the population. In most cases one or two teeth are missing but it can be more severe with many teeth not developing.

Which teeth are most affected?

- **Lower second premolars** - teeth in front of your lower molars.
- **Upper lateral incisors** - teeth that are next to your two front teeth.
- **Upper second premolars** - teeth in front of your upper molars



How would I know if I had hypodontia?

You may have noticed:

- Gaps between your teeth.
- Teeth that are small in size or appear pointed.
- Baby teeth that are still present.

An examination and an x-ray are needed for diagnosis.



How does this affect me?

You may be concerned about the appearance of your teeth, if there are teeth missing or if the teeth look small or pointy. It can also affect the way you eat or speak if many teeth are missing.



What are my treatment choices?

There are several different treatment options depending on your age, number of missing teeth, their position and how much space is available.

Option 1: Accept the space

This may be the option if missing teeth are at the back and the spaces are not visible.

Option 2: Close the space

Fixed braces are used to close the gaps so no tooth replacement is required.

Option 3: Tooth replacement

Fixed braces may be needed before tooth replacement to move teeth and create enough space. Once space is available one of the following can be fitted:

- **Dental bridges** - a false tooth fixed to neighbouring teeth.
- **Dentures** - removable plates with false teeth attached.
- **Dental implants** - false tooth attached to metal screws placed in the jawbone. This requires enough bone and when you have stopped growing. This option is appropriate for certain cases.



Tooth reshaping

Small and/or pointy teeth can be built up with tooth-coloured filling material to help improve appearance. Crowns and veneers may also be an option. Your general dental practitioner may provide your treatment or may consider a referral to a specialist for help and advice.

For further help or information

Contact details

What if I have a comment, suggestion, compliment or complaint about the service?

Contact our Customer Care Team on **01482 347627** or by emailing: **chcp.customercare@nhs.net**

We are always looking at ways to improve services. Your feedback allows us to monitor the quality of our services and act upon issues that you bring to our attention.

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