

The Mouth in Scleroderma



INFORMATION FOR DENTISTS



What is scleroderma?

- A potentially severe autoimmune condition that affects the skin and connective tissue
- The skin hardens as the body produces too much collagen
- This also affects internal organs, such as the heart and the digestive system
- Oral and dental manifestations of scleroderma (ODMS) are very common
- Early intervention and regular dental monitoring are crucial to achieve dental fitness

**There are different types of scleroderma that range in severity.
Everyone's experiences of scleroderma are different.**

How does scleroderma affect oral health?

- Tightening of the mouth (microstomia) can make it difficult to keep the mouth clean and to access the teeth for dental care
- Patients commonly report pain, tooth loss and damage, bleeding gums, mouth ulcers, changing facial appearance, and infections
- Patients may experience gastroesophageal reflux which can cause enamel erosion
- Dry mouth can cause caries and gum disease, and can make it hard for people to speak, eat, and sleep comfortably



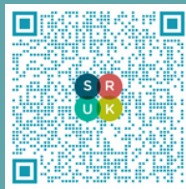
How do dental problems affect people with scleroderma?

- Depression and anxiety
- Low confidence
- Poor access to dental care
- Feel blamed for dental problems
- Can't open mouth for dental treatment
- Dental equipment is too large
- Social isolation
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Financial burden



How can you help patients with scleroderma?

- Seek out more information (scan here for SRUK's website)
- Discuss treatment plans with the patient's medical team
- Early intervention to control risk factors - *time is of the essence* to achieve dental fitness
- Plan for longer appointments with plenty of breaks for the patient
- Use the smallest dental instruments for patients with microstomia
- Be empathetic and patient



Most importantly: Just ask!

About me:

Medical team contact: _____

Medications: _____

What I want you to know about scleroderma and my dental care:

