

Poor oral hygiene among 19-year-olds

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Swedish 19-year-olds need to improve their oral hygiene habits. Seven out of eight adolescents have unacceptable oral hygiene, which increases the risk of future dental problems. These are the findings of a new study from the Sahlgrenska Academy at the University of Gothenburg.

The results have been published in the Swedish Dental Journal. The study examined 500 randomly selected [adolescents](#) from Västra Götaland (Fyrbodalen and Skaraborg).

"On average, these [adolescents](#) had plaque on half of all tooth surfaces, which is certainly too much. Seven out of eight adolescents had more plaque than is currently deemed acceptable," explains doctoral student Jessica Skoog Ericsson.

Gingivitis was also identified as a common problem resulting from poor [oral hygiene](#). This can generally increase the risk of future [dental problems](#) as well as tooth-loosening.

This study shows that the vast majority of adolescents, 76 per cent, brush their teeth at least twice a day. Four per cent of adolescents also use dental floss daily, but just as many don't clean their teeth at all some days.

"There may be some who are less than honest and say that they brush their teeth more regularly than they actually do, but other studies have shown that adolescents do generally brush their [teeth](#) on a regular basis. Poor oral hygiene is probably therefore due to them not brushing

correctly and not using dental floss," says Kajsa Henning Abrahamsson, a senior lecturer in odontology at the Sahlgrenska Academy.

Oral hygiene was slightly worse among the males in the study, compared with the females. The adolescents from Skaraborg had, on average, less plaque and gingivitis than those in Fyrbodal. However, socioeconomic factors, based on an index for the dental practice to which the adolescents belong in the region, had no impact on adolescents' oral hygiene.

This is not the first scientific study to show poor oral hygiene among Swedish adolescents.

"It is lamentable that so many adolescents have poor oral hygiene despite considerable investment in information and preventive measures. The dental profession as a whole now needs to look at the reasons why we are not getting through better to this group," says Kajsa Henning Abrahamsson.

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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