Dentist

Please see below for free dental options within the Sutherland Shire and information about children’s teeth; how to care for them, when you should be concerned, when to start taking them to the dentist and costs.

* South Eastern Sydney, Oral Health Service is committed to providing high quality dental care to our local community.

We offer **FREE** dental treatment to all [eligible](https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/directory/dental-services/eligibility) Adults, Young People and Children who reside within the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District boundaries.

<https://www.seslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/directory/dental-service>

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| [**Sutherland Hospital Dental Clinic**](https://www.google.com/maps/place/The+Sutherland+Hospital/@-34.037109,151.1126434,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m5!3m4!1s0x6b12c7ede83e1dd3:0xc6d085d869217bdf!8m2!3d-34.0371135!4d151.1148321) |  |
| Address: | Level 2, Cnr Kareena Road & The Kingsway Caringbah  NSW  2229 |
| Services: | Adult general dentistry Child / Youth general dentistry Domiciliary & Inpatient services Oral Health Fee for Service Scheme Child Dental Benefit Scheme |
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* If you receive money from a government service your child may be eligible for part or full cover of a dentist visit. Please see the link below to determine your eligibility.

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/child-dental-benefits-schedule>

Tooth decay in children is on the rise in Australia, with children aged 5 to 10 having an average of one and a half decayed, missing or filled baby teeth. So it’s more important than ever to teach your child good oral health habits that will stay with them for life.

Caring for children's teeth is important

It is important to look after your child’s teeth from the moment they start [teething](https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/how-your-babys-teeth-develop). Keeping your child’s teeth and gums clean will protect against infection, cavities and pain. Decayed baby teeth can damage the permanent teeth underneath.

If a child loses a tooth because of decay, it can cause crowding problems when their adult teeth come through later.

Dental care for babies

Many babies begin [teething](https://www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au/how-your-babys-teeth-develop) at around 3 months old, with the first teeth usually appearing at around 6 to 9 months. By the age of 1, a baby will usually have around 8 teeth. However, babies develop at different rates, so this can vary.

You should begin cleaning your baby’s teeth as soon as they arrive. To begin with, you can clean your baby’s teeth by wiping with a soft cloth or brushing with a soft toothbrush and water. From the age of 18 months, you can start using a low-fluoride toothpaste when you brush your child’s teeth.

You can buy toothpaste and small-headed toothbrushes especially for babies or children at your local pharmacy or supermarket. You will need to clean your baby or child’s teeth until they are old enough to do it themselves. This is usually around the age of 7 years.

It’s important for your child to get into a regular [oral hygiene](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/dental-care) routine to prevent tooth decay. Babies can be affected by tooth decay as soon as their first teeth arrive. The first signs of decay often appear as white spots or lines on the front teeth.

Take your baby to visit the dentist as soon as their teeth begin to appear so that the dentist can check their teeth are developing as they should.

Tips to keep your child's teeth clean

* Brush your child's teeth twice a day, using small circular motions. Their teeth should be cleaned after eating and before bed using toothpaste with fluoride that is suitable for children. This can help to strengthen the outside of the teeth and prevent decay. Make sure they brush for at least 2 minutes and remind them not to swallow the toothpaste.
* Help your child to brush their teeth from the time they get their first tooth until they are 7 or 8. After that, supervising them is still important.
* Try to get into a regular tooth brushing routine, and give your child plenty of praise when they brush their teeth well.
* Replace toothbrushes or toothbrush heads every 3 months.
* Children should floss as soon as they have 2 teeth that are in contact with each other. You should supervise flossing until they are about 10.
* To develop strong teeth, make sure your child eats a healthy, balanced diet and avoids foods with a lot of added sugar, such as lollies, biscuits and soft drinks. Always choose fluoridated tap water.

Visiting the dentist

Regular check-ups

Regular dental check-ups are important from the age of 1, or within 6 months of the first tooth appearing.

Always make a visit to the dentist a positive experience. Never use the dentist as a threat for not brushing teeth or other behaviour.

Corrective treatment

As your child's adult teeth grow through, make an appointment with the dentist if you notice any misalignment of the teeth or jaw. They will advise whether [corrective treatment](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/dental-appliances) is required.

When to seek further help

See the dentist if your child develops any of the following:

* bleeding, red or swollen gums
* pus coming from the gums
* a bad taste in the mouth that won’t go away
* loose teeth (this can be caused by infected gums)
* abscesses (these can be under the teeth and will usually be very painful)

You can find your nearest dentist in the [National Health Services Directory](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services).

Costs of dental care

About half of Australians visit the dentist every year. With [tooth decay](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/tooth-decay) on the rise in Australia, it’s important to make sure you’ll be able to afford a dentist if your child needs dental care.

The Australian Government covers the dental costs of some children through [Medicare](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/what-is-medicare). You can check whether your child is eligible on the [Child Dental Benefits Schedule](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/child-dental-benefits-schedule) website.

Some people use [private health insurance](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/private-health-insurance) to pay some or all of their dental costs. A majority of people with insurance will still have to pay some of the costs themselves. This is known as the ‘gap payment’ – the difference between what the dentist charges and what the insurer will pay.

The type of health insurance that pays for dental care is known as ‘General Treatment’ (sometimes called ‘Extras’ or ‘Ancillary’). Health insurance that only covers hospital or ambulance does not pay for dental care. Policies vary widely, so if you have private health insurance, check what dental care you are covered for, the amount you will receive back from the fund, and the limit on how much you can claim in a year.

Costs vary widely between dentists. Dental care can cost several hundreds of dollars. You can shop around, and also check whether dental check-ups are offered at your child’s school.

Sources:

[Dental Health Services Victoria](https://www.dhsv.org.au/) *(Dental advice for preschool children)*, [Dental Health Services Victoria](https://www.dhsv.org.au/) *(Dental advice for babies and toddlers)*, [Australian Dental Association](https://www.ada.org.au/) *(Introduction to Private Health Insurance)*, [Australian Dental Association](https://www.ada.org.au/) *(Kids)*, [Australian Dental Association](https://www.ada.org.au/) *(Babies)*, [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](https://www.aihw.gov.au/) *(Oral health and dental care in Australia)*, [Australian Dental Association](https://www.ada.org.au/) *(Dentist fees hold relatively stable according to latest survey results)*, [Raising Children Network](https://raisingchildren.net.au/) *(Dental care for toddlers)*, [Department of Human Services](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/) *(Child Dental Benefits Schedule)*

Learn more here about the [development and quality assurance of healthdirect content](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/about-our-content).

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