

Dental care for people with special needs

Dental care in New Zealand is free for everyone until they turn 18.

Preschool to Year 8 (primary and intermediate school)

The Community Dental Service provides dental care for children from birth until the end of intermediate school.

It can refer children to the Hospital Dental Service for one course of dental treatment, often under general anaesthetic. If the child needs continuing dental care that the Community Dental Service can't provide, the Hospital Dental Service will provide that dental care. The hospital service decides whether children are eligible for continuing care on a case-by-case basis.

Year 9 to Year 13 (teenagers)

Teenagers at school, on a course, employed or looking for work get dental care from general dentists in private practices. Most dental care is free. To find a dentist who provides free dental care for teenagers, phone **0800-825-583**.

If the dentist can't provide care, they may refer the teenager to the Hospital Dental Service for one course of treatment. If the teenager needs continuing dental care the Community Dental Service can't provide, the Hospital Dental Service may provide that dental care.

Adults with special needs

After teenagers turn 18 they generally don't receive publicly funded dental care. People aged 18 and over usually get dental care from private dentists, and pay for that care.

Adults in Canterbury with special needs, who attend a day programme or who are in supported living, can get regular dental care with the Hospital Dental Service. The fees are subsidised, but there will still be a small charge.

Dental care for people with special needs is provided at Hillmorton Hospital and at Christchurch Hospital.

Contacts:

Hospital Dental Service

Christchurch Hospital

Ph: (03) 364-0250

Email: oralhealthcentre@cdhb.health.nz

Community Dental Service

Ph: 0800-846-983 or 0800 TALK TEETH
(0800-825-583)

Web page: go to www.cdhb.health.nz and search for Community Dental Service

Compiled by Canterbury DHB dentists. Adapted by HealthInfo clinical advisers. June 2015.