



Tracy Doole



Laura Dunlop

## Laura Visits... Sandown Dental's Dental Hygienist

*I am rather fastidious about brushing my teeth and take pleasure in giving them a good scrub at least three times a day so I never really thought about visiting a dental hygienist. Why should I? My teeth are spotless!*

**I**n the name of research though, I tottered off to Sandown Dental & Implant Clinic in East Belfast to see Dental Hygienist Tracy Doole and I got quite the education! Because it was my first visit, it took about 30 minutes, but my next one in six months will only take around 20 minutes so I can pop out on my lunch hour. In the past, people were only able to see the hygienist if they were referred by their dentist but now anyone can and for good reason.

It all comes down to preventative dentistry and we all know prevention is better than cure! But what's the worst that could happen?

I was horrified to learn that tartar builds around the gum which over time rots away the bone and causes teeth to fall out! I was further horrified to learn that this happens to all age groups and not just the elderly. The problem is, there's only so much brushing and flossing can do and that's if you are actually doing it correctly in the first place.

After a thorough scale and fine scale (which removed all my tartar), Tracy gave my teeth a good polishing both with air flow (which was like microdermabrasion for the teeth) and a brush polisher. This wasn't painful at all and I decided the only slightly unpleasant thing about it was the drill-like noise of the instrument even though there wasn't a drill in sight. Being quite cocky about my teeth I was horrified to learn that I had some gum recession caused by my excessive scrubbing no less! I also had some erosion on the back of my teeth which has stemmed from my love of carbonated drinks, fruit juices and...ahem...copious amounts of wine.

Bi-annual trips to the hygienist will be able to keep an eye on these conditions for me and stop them from developing further. Most beneficial of all though, was the time Tracy took at the end of the session to give me a little lesson on how to brush my teeth properly (I can't believe I have been doing it wrong for 30 years! The shame!). She also showed me how to correctly floss using a floss pick – something I have always been wary of as I had no idea how to use one.

My mouth felt über clean and I kept running my tongue over my pristine teeth all day. It all comes down to maintaining our oral health and preventing serious periodontal diseases, because after all, we can slap on as many veneers as we like and whiten our teeth until they're worthy of a Simon Cowell-esque grin, but all that's really doing is masking the decay underneath. If your gums aren't in good shape, you're still at risk of tooth loss and let's face it – a toothless smile isn't a good look for anyone.

\*A session with the dental hygienist at Sandown Dental & Implant Clinic usually costs £45 but IN! readers can book in for just £36 (20 per cent off!) until the end of April. Just quote IN! when booking. Ts and Cs apply. For more information visit [www.sandowndental.com](http://www.sandowndental.com) or call 02890 471070 or email [info@sandowndental.com](mailto:info@sandowndental.com).

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