Drugs and Oral Health

The use of tobacco, ecstasy, amphetamines, methamphetamines, alcohol, heroin and replacement therapies such as methadone can cause the following:

**Tooth loss and gum disease**
- Smoking.
- Use of other drugs can also lead to tooth loss.

**Dry Mouth**
- Dry mouth limits saliva production and increases the risk of tooth decay, gum disease, inflammation and wearing away of teeth (erosion).
- Antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications, antihistamines, anti-inflammatory drugs and narcotics. In addition, drugs used for glaucoma and high blood pressure can also be to blame.

**Tooth Decay and erosion**
- Some drugs (such as ecstasy) cause a craving for sugary food and drinks.
- Drinking excess alcohol will weaken the outside of the tooth.
- Most alcoholic drinks are sugary and acidic and lead to a dry mouth.
- Vomiting after drinking alcohol can cause erosion of the teeth surface.

**Gum Overgrowth**
- Can be caused by epilepsy, heart, high blood pressure medications and those used to control the immune system.

**Cancer of the mouth (oral cancer)**
- Smoking tobacco can cause cancer of the mouth and throat.
- Drinking a lot of alcohol and marijuana also increases the risk of oral cancer.

**Tooth Discoloration**
- Smoking stains the teeth yellow-brown.
- Tetracyclines must be avoided below the age of 12 due to the tendency to permanently affect the colour of the teeth.

**Jaw Clenching and Teeth Grinding**
- Can occur with ecstasy, cocaine, amphetamine and methamphetamine, antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications.