

### Innovative New Treatments Take Fear Out Of Dentist's Chair

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Leeds Dental Institute, ranked the top school in the UK for dentistry is currently looking at new and better ways to improve dental treatment and take the fear factor out of the patient experience for good.

Professor Jennifer Kirkham, Research Director of Leeds Dental Institute explains: "The laboratory is looking to find safe new ways to control plaque which do not rely on toothpaste. We see patients in the clinic who are not able to brush effectively the shape of the mouth may not allow sufficient access, the patient could be disabled or just not a proficient brusher.

"One of the new treatments makes use of a readily available compound in an innovative way to control plaque formation, using photo dynamic therapy (PDT). The patient uses a mouth wash containing an anti-bacterial agent which is activated by bright light and results in plaque destruction. This is trialled in the clinic and patient feedback helps researchers identify where further modifications are needed.

"The principle of working from bench to clinic and back to bench will see a circle of constant improvements to oral health and it is this partnership with patients which ensures research has an impact. "

Another research project could transform the approach to filling teeth forever. Professor Kirkham explains.

"Tooth decay begins when acid produced by the bacteria in plaque dissolves the tooth minerals, resulting in microscopic pores in the teeth. We have developed a method for "Filling without Drilling" that uses a low viscosity protein based fluid which is painted onto the teeth where it infiltrates into the pores. Once inside the pores, the fluid solidifies, to become a gel which then attracts calcium to rebuild the tooth mineral, bringing about a natural repair, without the pain or discomfort usually associated with a traditional drilling procedure. "

A £1.5 million investment by the University of Leeds is set to bring the new Dental Clinic and Translational Research Unit to the forefront of global research and development in oral health by linking the laboratory activity directly to the needs of patients treated in the clinic.

The flagship centre for world class dental research and clinical practice, the first of its kind in the UK, opens at the Leeds Dental Institute in January 2009

For more information see <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/dental>

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