

Dentistry · Bleeding gums in pregnancy

SPK-DEN-01 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Dental clinic

You are a dentist. Ms Nomsa Engstrom, aged 29, is 20 weeks pregnant with her first child and has come in because her gums bleed when she brushes. Your examination shows red, swollen gums consistent with pregnancy gingivitis and a small cavity in a lower back tooth that needs a filling. Before the examination she told you she does not want any X-rays or injections while she is pregnant and would prefer to wait until after the birth.

Interlocutor: PATIENT

Your tasks

1. Find out about Ms Engstrom's symptoms, her usual oral hygiene routine and what she has read about dental treatment in pregnancy
2. Explain the cause of her bleeding gums and how to care for them at home (hormonal changes, plaque, brushing and cleaning between teeth)
3. Reassure her about the safety of dental treatment during pregnancy (X-rays only if needed, local anaesthetic, second trimester)
4. Explain why the filling should not be delayed until after the birth
5. Agree a treatment plan and arrange follow-up

Dentistry · Painful wisdom tooth before an overseas flight

SPK-DEN-02 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Dental clinic

You are a dentist. Mr Iwan Gwilliam, aged 22, is a university student who has come in with pain around his lower right wisdom tooth for three days. On examination the tooth is partially erupted, and the gum flap over it is red, tender and has food trapped beneath it. There is no facial swelling, he can open his mouth normally and his temperature is normal. Your diagnosis is mild pericoronitis. He is flying overseas in four days.

Interlocutor: PATIENT

Your tasks

1. Find out about Mr Gwilliam's symptoms and his travel plans
2. Explain the diagnosis and why removing the tooth or prescribing antibiotics is not recommended today (healing time before flying, no signs of spreading infection)
3. Reassure him about managing the problem while he is away
4. Explain today's treatment and home care (cleaning under the gum, mouth rinses, pain relief, warning signs needing urgent care)
5. Agree a plan, including assessment for removal after his return

Dentistry · Dentist: early childhood tooth decay and a defensive parent

SPK-DEN-03 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Dental clinic

You are a dentist. Ms Bhavana Unnikrishnan has brought her 4-year-old son for his first dental check-up after several weeks of pain when eating. Your examination shows decay in several of his baby molars, some of it extensive, in a pattern that suggests frequent sugary drinks; there is no facial swelling or sign of spreading infection, and you have already provided interim care today to ease his pain. He needs a referral to a specialist children's dentist for treatment, and your practice will continue to provide his routine and emergency dental care while he waits, as well as supporting changes to his diet and brushing at home.

Interlocutor: PARENT

Your tasks

1. Find out about her son's drinking and eating habits and his tooth-brushing routine at home
2. Explain your findings and why baby teeth matter (chewing, speech, holding space for adult teeth, risk of pain and infection)
3. Reassure Ms Unnikrishnan in a non-judgemental way and respond to her belief that baby teeth do not need treatment
4. Advise on practical changes at home (bedtime drinks, sugary foods and drinks, brushing with fluoride toothpaste)
5. Explain the referral and what to do if his symptoms get worse, and agree a plan for home care and follow-up

Dentistry · Neglected oral care in a parent with dementia

SPK-DEN-04 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Dental clinic

You are a dentist. You have just examined an 83-year-old man with moderate dementia who has lived in a care home for eight months. He has several root cavities and has lost his upper partial denture. His daughter, Mrs Lindiwe Haugen, came with him and is angry with the care home. She wants all his treatment done in one visit. You plan to prescribe high-fluoride toothpaste and set up a shared daily mouth-care plan with the care home staff and the family.

Interlocutor: RELATIVE

Your tasks

1. Find out about Mrs Haugen's concerns and her father's current daily mouth care (who helps him, how he copes with brushing, what he eats and drinks)
2. Explain why his treatment needs to be planned over several shorter visits (dementia, tolerance of treatment, steps involved in making a new denture)
3. Explain the daily mouth-care routine he needs (high-fluoride toothpaste, supervised brushing by staff, what to do if he refuses, reducing sugary snacks and drinks)
4. Respond to her anger and encourage her to take part in a shared care plan
5. Agree the next steps (written plan for the care home, follow-up appointment)

Dentistry · Dentist: root canal treatment or extraction for an anxious patient

SPK-DEN-05 | Original simulated candidate card

Setting: Dental clinic

You are a dentist. Mr Bogdan Kowalczyk, aged 38, has had three days of severe, throbbing pain in his lower left first molar. You have diagnosed irreversible pulpitis. The tooth has a large old filling but is restorable, and you recommend root canal treatment. Mr Kowalczyk is very anxious and is demanding that the tooth be extracted today.

Interlocutor: PATIENT

Your tasks

1. Find out about his previous root canal experience and what worries him most about treatment
2. Explain the diagnosis and why root canal treatment is recommended (saving a restorable natural tooth)
3. Explain the possible long-term consequences of extracting the tooth
4. Reassure him about how pain and anxiety can be managed during treatment (e.g. effective anaesthesia, agreed stop signal, sedation options)
5. Agree a plan for treatment today