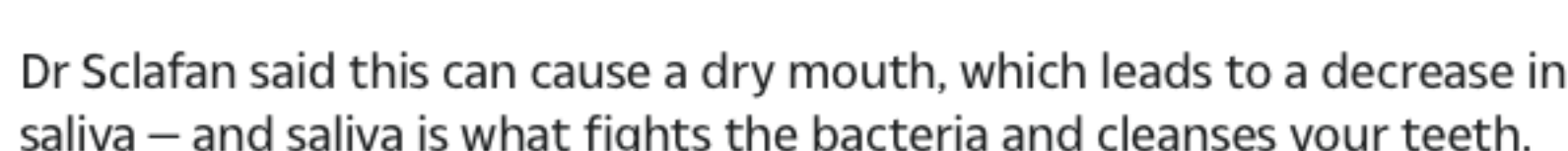


Terri-Ann Williams, Digital Health & Fitness Reporter
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Experts suggest the increased use of masks due to [coronavirus](#) has left some patients with gum disease and bad breath.

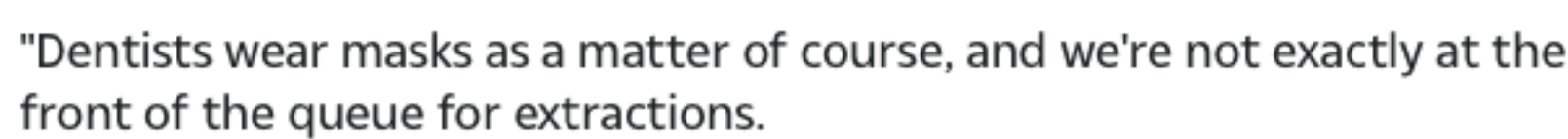


He added that people are also drinking less water because they are wearing masks which is leading to dehydration.

Despite this, experts at the British Dental Association (BDA) have said that a deterioration in oral health could be down to a lockdown diet, rather than the use of masks.

The BDA's scientific adviser Professor Damien Walmsley said attempts to link the use of masks to tooth decay are motivated by political prejudice and are not about protecting public health.

"Recent claims on 'mask mouth' are risible. East Asian societies - where face coverings have been ubiquitous for decades - are not confronting an epidemic of decay.



"If patients have seen a deterioration in their oral health, it makes more sense to look at lockdown diets and lack of access to dental services than to indulge in mythmaking."

In the UK it is [mandatory to wear a face mask or covering](#) in all shops and supermarkets.

While masks are compulsory in most public settings, there are exceptions to those who need to wear them.

Transport Secretary [Grant Shapps](#) said: "There will be exceptions to these rules for very young children, disabled people and those with breathing difficulties."

According to the official Government guidance, the following groups are not required to wear a [face-covering](#) while using public transport or in a shop:

- A child under the age of 11
- People who cannot put on, wear or remove a face covering because of a physical or mental illness or impairment, or disability
- An employee of the transport operator, or in any other

indoor setting where appropriate when they are acting in the course of their employment

- Where a mask causes the wearer severe distress
- An emergency responder such as a police officer, paramedic or fire officer acting in the course of their duty
- Someone speaking to or helping anyone who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate
- Someone acting to avoid harm or injury, or the risk of harm or injury, to themselves or others - including if it would negatively impact on your ability to exercise or participate in a strenuous activity ■

It is also mandatory to wear a covering on public transport and if you are receiving a service such as a hair cut.

In these scenarios the hair dresser will also have to wear a mask and a visor.

"Patients are coming into us like, 'Wow, my breath smells, I need a cleaning.'

"When you smell the bad breath, you either already have periodontal disease or you have a lot of bacteria that's sitting on your tongue because of dry mouth,"

While masks need to be worn during the pandemic he said that there are things people can do to prevent "mask mouth".

Dr Emma Cunningham, dentist and founder of www.dr-emma.co.uk

"It appears that most people when wearing masks breathe through their

models as opposed to their noses, and this results in reduced saliva production and dry mouth, which becomes problematic as saliva is protective against tooth decay and gum disease.