



[Issue: Spring, 2024](#)

## Welcome to Tooth Works!

We're excited to bring you the first edition of the Tooth Works newsletter! Our goal is to keep you informed on the latest Tooth Works news, updates, and oral health tips to keep your smile bright and healthy.

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## Team Update

It's with mixed emotions that we announce the departure of two of our beloved dentists, **Imelda Wilkes** and **Lia Vuli**. After providing exceptional care to our patients over the past few years, they are moving on to new endeavours. Both Imelda and Lia have been invaluable members of the Tooth Works family, and their dedication and compassion will be deeply missed by the team and our patients alike. We are incredibly grateful for all the care they have shown and remain hopeful that they may return in the future.

On a brighter note, we are thrilled to welcome two new dentists to our team next year, both graduates of Otago University:

- **Yahya Al Shukri**, who has spent the past two years working at Southland Hospital as a dental house surgeon, brings a gentle and empathetic approach to patient care.
- **Lauren Southorn**, after a year practising in Gore, is excited to join us here in Invercargill. Lauren, originally trained as a nurse, offers a broad skill set and is looking forward to embracing life in a larger city.

We are also excited to have **Paul Richter** returning for another locum stint in January 2025. Paul will be with us for nine weeks, and we're looking forward to having him back on the team, even if it's only for a short while.

Meanwhile, we are fortunate to still have our senior clinicians, **Jo McMillan** and **Elizabeth Tan**, who continue to provide top-tier care and expertise at Tooth Works. Their experience and dedication remain an essential part of our practice.

Our wonderful **Oral Health Therapists (OHTs)**, **Kate Johnston** and **Larissa Miller**, continue to play a key role in maintaining the quality care we're known for. We also continue to benefit from the expertise of **Jimmy Chao** from Cosmetic Dentures, who travels down from Christchurch twice a week to assist with dentures, bite splints, and more.

Lastly, November marks a significant milestone for Kate — it's her **5th anniversary** of owning Tooth Works. The journey has been quite a rollercoaster, especially with challenges like lockdown just five months after taking over the business, navigating new regulations, and facing supply and dentist shortages. Coming from a clinical background, it has been a steep learning curve, but she has been incredibly lucky to have the support of such a fantastic team.

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## Spotlight on Periodontal Health

At Tooth Works, we care about more than just keeping your teeth sparkling; we're dedicated to helping you maintain **healthy gums** too! Good periodontal health is key to your overall oral well-being and can even affect your general health. But what exactly is periodontal health, and why is it so important?

**Periodontal health** refers to the condition of your gums and the structures that support your teeth. Without proper care, you may develop **gum disease** (also known as periodontal disease), which can range from mild inflammation to serious conditions that can lead to tooth loss. In fact, gum disease is one of the leading causes of adult tooth loss, but it's also largely preventable with regular care.

### What Causes Gum Disease?

Gum disease is primarily caused by the buildup of **plaque** on teeth. Plaque contains bacteria that can irritate the gums, leading to inflammation, bleeding, and eventually gum recession or worse if left untreated.

### Signs You Might Have Gum Disease

- Red, swollen, or tender gums
- Bleeding when brushing or flossing
- Persistent bad breath
- Gums that seem to be pulling away from the teeth (gum recession)
- Loose teeth

If any of these symptoms sound familiar, it's time to take action. The good news is that gum disease can be managed and often reversed in its early stages with proper care and regular professional cleanings.

### Preventing Gum Disease

Maintaining good oral hygiene at home — brushing and flossing daily — is essential. But, just as important is scheduling regular visits with your OHT. Our OHTs at Tooth Works are specially trained to perform **professional cleans** that remove plaque and tartar, even in areas that are hard to reach on your own. These cleans can help prevent gum disease from taking hold or progressing further.

### Your Hygiene Appointment at Tooth Works

At Tooth Works, our dedicated OHTs are here to ensure your smile stays healthy and bright. During your hygiene appointment, you can expect:

- **30-40 Minute Clean:** A thorough professional clean to remove plaque and tartar, keeping your teeth and gums in excellent condition.
- **Oral Hygiene Instructions:** Personalised tips and techniques to enhance your daily dental care routine at home.
- **Periodontal Charting:** Comprehensive monitoring of your gum health to detect any early signs of periodontal issues and track your progress over time.

Based on your individual needs, our OHTs will recommend tailored strategies to improve your at-home care and suggest the best recall schedule for you, whether it's every **6 months**, **9 months**, or **12 months**. Regular hygiene appointments are essential for maintaining optimal oral health and preventing potential issues before they arise.

Book your next hygiene appointment with our skilled team and take proactive steps towards a healthier, happier smile!

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### Tooth Works in the Community

At Tooth Works, we believe in giving back to the community that supports us, and this year has been filled with exciting initiatives aimed at making a difference locally. We're proud to share some of the ways we have been involved in helping our community thrive:

- **Sponsoring Pirates Old Boys Y4 Rugby Team:** We're thrilled to sponsor this talented group of young athletes and help them continue their love for the game. Supporting youth sports is a great way to encourage healthy lifestyles and teamwork from a young age.
  - **Sponsoring Girls Only Grade at the Old Boys Football Festival:** We are committed to fostering inclusivity in sports, which is why we proudly sponsored the Girls Only Grade at this year's Football Festival. It's fantastic to see more opportunities for young girls to get involved in football and develop their skills.
  - **Donations to Hospice Southland and Invercargill's Ronald McDonald Family Room:** To help families in need, we donated toothbrushes and toothpaste to two important local organisations — **Hospice Southland** and **Ronald McDonald Family Room** in Invercargill. These donations are just a small way of supporting the health and well-being of families going through challenging times.
  - **Tooth Works Community Day:** We held our first-ever **Tooth Works Community Day**, an initiative we're especially proud of. On this day, we spent the afternoon offering dental services to some of the more vulnerable members of our community. It was incredibly rewarding to be able to give back to those who need it most, and we're excited to continue this tradition in the future.
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### Stay Connected!

Follow us on social media to stay up to date on all things Tooth Works:

- <https://www.facebook.com/toothworksinvercargill>
- Instagram: [tooth\\_works](#)

If you have any questions or would like to schedule an appointment, feel free to contact us at 03 2184937 or [reception@toothworks.co.nz](mailto:reception@toothworks.co.nz).

Thank you for being part of the Tooth Works family. We look forward to seeing you at your next appointment!