

Policy Statement 2.2.7 – Community Oral Health Promotion: Emergency Overseas Dental Treatment

Position Summary

Travellers should ensure that they do not depart from Australia with a pre-existing dental problem. Information given to travellers by governments and other organisations should include information on the prevention and treatment of dental emergencies.

1. Background

- 1.1. Australians are enthusiastic and frequent overseas travellers. It is inevitable that some of these travellers will experience dental emergencies that will require treatment whilst they are off-shore.
- 1.2. There is little information and advice publicly available for travellers regarding dental emergencies or their prevention.
- 1.3. Untreated dental decay, periodontal (gum) disease, impacted wisdom teeth and other oral diseases may cause serious problems for travellers.
- 1.4. Some travellers will suffer dental trauma.
- 1.5. The chance of a dental emergency whilst travelling overseas is greatly increased if the traveller departs Australia with unidentified and/or untreated dental problems.
- 1.6. Dental treatment may be difficult to access in some countries and the standards of care may not be the same as in Australia.
- 1.7. The cost of overseas dental treatment, especially for pre-existing conditions, may not be covered by travel insurance or private health insurance.

2. Position

- 2.1. Travellers should ensure that they do not depart from Australia with a pre-existing dental problem.
- 2.2. Travellers should have a dental examination at least three months before departure to allow time for completion of any necessary dental treatment before they leave Australia.
- 2.3. Travellers, especially young adults, should know the status of their wisdom teeth and have any associated problems treated prior to departure.
- 2.4. Travellers should ensure that they have adequate insurance to cover the costs of emergency dental treatment overseas.
- 2.5. Travellers should be advised that if they experience a dental emergency whilst overseas, information on availability of treatment can be obtained from the consular services provided through Australian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates. Where there is no Australian overseas post, Canadian Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates provide this advice to Australian citizens.
- 2.6. Governments and organisations providing advice to travellers should include information on the prevention and treatment of dental emergencies.
- 2.7. Travellers should request a written report including radiographs on any emergency dental treatment received overseas to be passed on to their regular dentist on return from abroad.

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