

19 October 2009

Press Release**Bid to boost usage of NHS dentists**

STOCKTON families are being urged to register with an NHS dentist and make sure they keep their appointments as a Tees wide campaign lands on their doorstep on Saturday (24 OCTOBER).

Teams from NHS Stockton-On-Tees will be handing out goody bags containing toothbrushes, toothpaste, stress balls, pens and puzzles to shoppers in Wellington Square while a video highlighting the importance of looking after their pearly whites plays on the big screen.

The aim of the roadshow is to encourage people to register with an NHS dental practice, cancel appointments if they are unable to attend and quash any misconceptions that it is difficult to find an NHS dentist in the town. Currently there are two dental practices in the Stockton area taking on new NHS patients.

Kamini Shah, Consultant in Dental Public Health for NHS Tees, said regular visits to the dentist can help people avoid unnecessary toothache and also detect early signs of serious problems such as mouth cancer: "Getting a NHS dental appointment is easy, just ring the dental helpline number on 0345 045 0620 or text 07700 380000. We would recommend adults go for check ups at least once every two years even if you have no teeth."

The dental helpline can help people find local NHS dentists, explain NHS dental costs and provide advice on extended opening hours and specialist dental services.

ENDS

Issued by the Communications and Engagement Directorate for the four Primary Care Trusts on Teesside.

For information, photographs and interviews, please contact **Marie Levy**, press officer on **01642 352623** or by e-mail: **marie.levy@middlesbroughpct.nhs.uk**

Riverside House, 18 High Force Road, Middlesbrough. TS2 1RH