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Drop-in dental care from latest Canary Wharf clinic

By Louisa Emery on May 27, 2011 4:05 PM | Tagged with: canary wharf, dentist, hygienist, mike hutter, smilepod, teeth

When was the last time you went to the dentist? Half the population haven't had their teeth checked for more than 12 months – suggesting there is a ready market for the latest addition to the roster of Canary Wharf walk-in health clinics.



Smilepod is not a dentist but it offers a range of hygiene and cosmetic services normally only available through a dental practice.

Co-founder Mike Hutter said: "When I was researching I looked at nail bars, hairdressers and beauty clinics and thought – why can't you get the same service with dental care?"

Everyone wants cleaner, whiter, straighter teeth and they don't want anything else. They might need it but they don't want it."

Mr Hutter said simplicity, location and convenience were the main strengths of the business, which also has branches in Bank and Covent Garden. The reception is designed to appear unisex and the price list on the wall, laid out like a fast food restaurant menu, offers set prices.

The UK has 22,000 dentists but just 6,000 hygienists so Smilepod's services usually command a long waiting list.

Here, Mr Hutter said, you could walk in and, if you couldn't be seen immediately, you could make an appointment.

With such easy access and no need to be referred by a dentist surely there is potential to exploit people's insecurities?



Mr Hutter said: "We haven't seen any compulsive cleaners yet and we don't see anyone more frequently than every three or four months.

"People are always going to get tartar on their teeth and it's always going to need to be cleaned."

Wharf verdict:

I have the classic recurring nightmare about all my teeth falling out. This is meant to mean money worries but it's simpler than that – losing my teeth is one of my biggest fears.

As a dental obsessive I travel more than 30 miles to my NHS dentist and because the hygienist is private, I can never get the two appointments on the same day. So I was hoping to be impressed by Smilepod.

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My treatment was a posh scale and polish – my teeth and gums were blasted, scraped and buffed in around half an hour. An ultrasonic scaler got to work on my tartar before the dreaded hand scaling (the bit where they pick away at the plaque with a little metal tool).

Then the diamond paste (contains real diamonds) was applied to polish my teeth to a smooth finish before the calcium carbonate air flow, which tasted foul but made sure there were no stains left on my now pearly whites.

At £85 this is a pricey option but Smilepod is not expensive. Its Smile On The Run – a 15 minute quick clean – is £35 and The Classic – your typical scale and polish – is £65, roughly the same price I pay at my dental surgery. At Home Whitening starts at £295.

Smilepod opened last week in Canada Place mall.

Go to smilepod.co.uk.

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