

Keys to Good Oral Health

Keep Healthy Habits for Life

By Judith Nembhard

Oral hygiene is about far more than a pretty smile. It's important for overall health. How well you keep up the health of your mouth, teeth, and gums affects everything from your breath to your risk of cancer and even heart disease. Your overall oral health can provide important clues about your overall wellness.

The mouth contains a host of bacteria, which normal preventive care can keep under control. If oral care is neglected, however, harmful bacteria can grow out of control and cause oral infections like tooth decay and gum disease. To protect your oral health, follow sound guidelines for daily oral care.



Brush at least twice each day, and replace your toothbrush every 3-4 months. Keep your toothbrush clean by rinsing it under hot water after each use for at least 10 seconds.



BRUSHING

Oral health begins with clean teeth, so when you brush, take the time to do a thorough job. Don't brush hurriedly, and avoid harsh scrubbing—this can irritate the gums. Brush at least twice each day, and replace your toothbrush every 3-4 months. Brush inside the mouth, the chewing surfaces, as well as the tongue. Keep your toothbrush clean by rinsing it under hot water after each use for at least 10 seconds.

Make sure you have a good toothbrush. A soft-bristled brush is the most comfortable and the safest. Medium and hard brushes can damage the gums, root surface, and protective enamel, depending on how vigorously you brush.

FLOSSING

Flossing is important because it removes bacteria-harboring plaque in places your brush can't reach. If plaque isn't removed, it can harden into tartar, which only a dentist can remove. Plaque and tartar build-up can also lead to cavities and

gum disease. The American Dental Association recommends flossing at least once each day to eliminate the bacteria that cause bad breath, gingivitis (inflammation of the gum tissue), and periodontal disease (inflammatory diseases affecting the periodontium, i.e., the tissues that surround and support the teeth).

REGULAR DENTAL VISITS

Your dentist can help you decide how often you need cleanings. People who smoke or have diabetes are more at risk of gum disease and will need more frequent visits. People with suppressed immune systems are also more likely to have dental problems and can benefit from more frequent visits to the dentist as well.

OTHER HEALTHY HABITS

Don't smoke. Smoking increases your risk of oral cancer, gingivitis, periodontitis, and tooth decay. Tobacco use also contributes to bad breath and stains on the teeth.

Eat a healthy diet. Eating a healthy diet and limiting snacks high in simple sugars can contribute to better oral health. If you eat snacks and the food remains on your teeth for a while, your teeth are exposed to acids produced by bacteria. Eat a balanced diet to provide important minerals and vitamins that promote good oral as well as general health. 🦷

*“Gorgeous Smiles
Are Our Business”*



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