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DENTAL ASSOCIATION

How To Practice Good Oral Hygiene

Prevention is the best option

Practicing a good oral hygiene routine, combined with regular visits to the dentist, can help protect your teeth and mouth.

Most oral health conditions are largely preventable and can be treated in their early stages. Maintaining good oral health has a positive impact on your general health, well-being, and quality of life.

How to keep your mouth healthy throughout life

- Brush for two minutes, twice a day: toothbrushing helps remove food and plaque, which if not managed can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.
- Brush every surface: use a manual or electric toothbrush to brush the inside surfaces, outside surfaces and chewing surfaces of your teeth. Brush in circular motions – not back and forth.
- Use a fluoride toothpaste: fluoride plays a key role in the fight against tooth decay.
- Do not rinse with water straight after brushing: this can wash the protective fluoride away. Spit out any excess toothpaste instead.
- Replace your toothbrush every three months: the average life of a toothbrush is about three months. Change any toothbrushes with splayed, worn-looking or missing bristles. Brushing with an old, frayed toothbrush will not clean your teeth and mouth properly.
- Floss at least once a day: floss and interdental cleaners help reach those difficult areas between your teeth. Regular cleaning helps to dislodge food and may reduce gum disease and bad breath by removing plaque that forms along the gum line.

- Protect your mouth while you're on the go: when brushing is not possible, rinse with a fluoride mouthwash or chew sugar-free gum after meals and snacks.
- Let your dentist help you. One of the best ways to protect your mouth is by going to the dentist for regular check-ups and dental cleanings. The dentist can help keep your teeth and mouth healthy.

A regular check-up allows your dentist to see if you have any dental problems, provide a treatment plan if necessary and remove any build-up of plaque, which if not managed can lead to tooth decay (dental caries) or gum disease (periodontitis).

By working with your dentist, you can also learn how to prevent oral diseases and possibly avoid the need for treatment altogether.

The dentist will:
- Examine your teeth, gums and mouth.
- Advise how to maintain good oral health through eating a balanced, low-sugar diet, avoiding tobacco and limiting alcohol.
- Educate you on how to keep your teeth and mouth healthy through good oral hygiene habits, including how to brush your teeth and floss correctly.
- Provide any necessary treatment.
- Discuss a date for your next visit.
- Work with you to help maintain your oral and general health.