

DENTAL

Advice for Parents and Children

Everyone wants to have a great smile which is why good oral hygiene is important! Having poor oral hygiene can lead to a variety of dental and medical problems in the future such as gum disease, infection, bone loss, heart disease, strokes and more. Regular check ups and cleanings can prevent these problems as well as provide you with good oral hygiene.



PROPER BRUSHING

One of the easiest steps to do to help your teeth keep clean. When brushing your teeth, position the bristles at an angle of 45 degrees near the gum line. Both the gum line and the tooth surface should be in contact with the bristles. Brush the outer surfaces of the teeth using a back-and-forth, up-and-down motion, making sure to be done gently in order to avoid bleeding. To clean the inside surfaces of the teeth and gums, place the bristles at a 45-degree angle again and repeat the back-and-forth, up-and-down motion. Lastly, brush the surfaces of your tongue and the roof of your mouth to remove bacteria, which might cause bad breath.



FLOSSING!

We know, it's a chore and a lot of times forgetful after brushing if rushing out the door or heading to bed. However, flossing can help you remove food particles and other detrimental substances that brushing regularly cannot. Flossing allows you to reach deep between your teeth where the toothbrush bristles cannot reach or even mouthwash cannot wash away. We recommend flossing at least once a day.



AVOID TOBACCO

This will be a big favor to your teeth. One, it will save you from oral cancer and periodontal complications. Two, it will save you from the countless ill effects caused by the agents used to mask the smell of tobacco. For example, if you smoke a cigarette, you may use candies, tea or coffee to mask the smoky breath and odor. This doubles the amount of damage caused.



LIMIT SODAS, COFFEE AND ALCOHOL

Although these beverages contain a high level of phosphorous, which is a necessary mineral for a healthy mouth, too much phosphorous can deplete the body's level of calcium. This causes dental hygiene problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. Beverages containing additives such as corn syrup and food dye can make pearly white teeth appear dull and discolored. Therefore, it is best to choose beverages like milk, which helps strengthen teeth and build stronger enamel, giving you a healthy, beautiful smile and water which hydrates your body longer than sugary drinks.



LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE

Everyone understands that you should take care of your teeth to avoid toothaches, maintain your looks and keep dental bills at bay. Many people, however, don't understand how crucial oral health is to our total health picture. Tooth problems can lead to diabetes, heart disease, systemic infections, an inability to eat or speak properly and other maladies – some life-threatening. Crooked or crowded teeth can contribute to gum disease that can eventually lead to tooth loss. Straight teeth are no longer just for looks.



CLEAN YOUR TONGUE

Clean the surface of your tongue daily. By using a professional tongue cleaner you remove countless bacteria that otherwise live, particularly on the rougher top surface of your tongue. These can contribute to bad breath (halitosis) and negatively affect your dental health.



CARING FOR YOUR MOUTH

Brush your teeth last thing at night and at least one other time during the day with a fluoride toothpaste.

Clean in between your teeth at least once a day using interdental brushes or floss.

To check if you have bad breath lick your wrist, let it dry and give it a sniff, if it smells your breath probably does too.

If you use mouthwash don't use it directly after brushing as you rinse away the fluoride from your toothpaste.

Quit smoking to help reduce the chances of tooth staining, gum disease, tooth loss, and in more severe cases mouth cancer.

Make sure your toothpaste contains fluoride; it helps strengthen tooth enamel making it more resistant to decay.

Change your toothbrush every two to three months or sooner if it becomes worn as it will not clean the teeth properly.



VISITING YOUR DENTIST

Visit your dentist regularly, as often as they recommend.

Some dentists may offer home visits for people who are housebound or have difficulty visiting the surgery.

If you are nervous about visiting the dentist, make sure they are aware of why so they can improve your treatment.

Help to overcome dental anxiety by taking a friend with you for support or listen to music to help you relax and focus on something else.

Your dentist will carry out a visual mouth-cancer check during your regular check-up.

Visiting a dental hygienist can help give you excellent tips and advice on preventing dental problems.



DIET AND YOUR ORAL HEALTH

Chew sugar-free gum after eating or drinking, especially sugary foods, to help protect your teeth and gums in between meals.

Wait an hour after eating or drinking anything before brushing as then enamel will be softened and you could be brushing away tiny particles.

A varied diet that is rich in vitamins, minerals, and fresh fruit and vegetables can help to prevent gum disease.

Avoid snacking and try to only have sugary foods and drinks at mealtimes, reducing the time your teeth come under attack.

If you have a sweet tooth try to choose sugar free sweets and drinks which contain xylitol as it can actively contribute to your oral health.



CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH

Weaning your baby off the bottle early can help them avoid developing dental problems.

All children up to three years old, should use a smear of toothpaste with a fluoride level of no less than 1000ppm (parts per million). After three years old, they should use a toothpaste that contains 1350ppm -1500ppm.

Parents should try and supervise your children's tooth brushing until they are about 7 years old.

Take your child to the dentist early, as soon as their teeth start to appear, this will help them get used to the sights, sounds and smells of a dental practice.

Use a timer or brush along to a song to ensure your children are brushing for the correct amount of time.

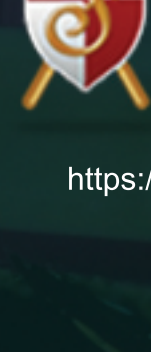
Use a reward chart to track your children's brushing habits and get them actively involved in brushing their teeth.

Use disclosing tablets to show areas of your children's mouth which may need better brushing.



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