

[Insert Company Name]

How to Maintain Good Oral Health



Drink fluoridated water and use fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride's protection against tooth decay works at all ages.

Take care of your teeth and gums. Thorough tooth brushing and flossing to reduce dental plaque can prevent gingivitis—the mildest form of gum disease.

Avoid tobacco. In addition to the general health risks posed by tobacco, smokers have 4 times the risk of developing gum disease compared to non-smokers. Tobacco use in any form—cigarette, pipes, and smokeless (spit) tobacco—increases the risk for gum disease, oral and throat cancers, and oral fungal infection (candidiasis). Spit tobacco containing sugar increases the risk of tooth decay.

Limit alcohol. Heavy use of alcohol is also a risk factor for oral and throat cancers. When used alone, alcohol and tobacco are risk factors for oral cancers, but when used in combination the effects of alcohol and tobacco are even greater.

Eat wisely. Adults should avoid snacks full of sugars and starches. Limit the number of snacks eaten throughout the day. The recommended five-a-day helping of fiber-rich fruits and vegetables stimulates salivary flow to aid remineralization of tooth surfaces with early stages of tooth decay.

Visit the dentist regularly. Check-ups can detect early signs of oral health problems and can lead to treatments that will prevent further damage, and in some cases, reverse the problem. Professional tooth cleaning (prophylaxis) also is important for preventing oral problems, especially when self-care is difficult.

Diabetic patients should work to maintain control of their disease. This will help prevent the complications of diabetes, including an increased risk of gum disease.

If medications produce a dry mouth, ask your doctor if there are other drugs that can be substituted. If dry mouth cannot be avoided, drink plenty of water, chew sugarless gum, and avoid tobacco and alcohol.

Have an oral health check-up before beginning cancer treatment. Radiation to the head or neck and/or chemotherapy may cause problems for your teeth and gums. Treating existing oral health problems before cancer therapy may help prevent or limit oral complications or tissue damage.



Additional information may be found at www.cdc.gov