

Health tip: Healthier Dental Habits

Due to water fluoridation and fluoride toothpaste, the baby boomer generation is the first to keep their natural teeth over their entire lifetime. However, threats to oral health, including tooth loss, poses a risk to all generations. Poor dental hygiene is correlated with several other diseases not directly in the mouth, including diabetes, heart disease, pneumonia and rheumatoid arthritis.



A healthier mouth for a lifetime includes:³

- Regular dental visits
- Brush twice a day for at least 2 minutes
- Floss once a day
- Do not use tobacco products
- Limit sugary and alcoholic beverages

Brushing is probably the most obvious mouth hygiene component. It's recommended that you brush your teeth twice a day for at least 2 minutes. Gently brush back and forth in short strokes. Be sure to brush outer, inner, and chewing surfaces of the teeth and the tongue. It is a good idea to replace your toothbrush every 3-4 months.



Other ways to maintain good oral hygiene:³

- Proper nutrition
- Drink plenty of water
- Limit the number of snacks you eat
- Eat a variety of foods from each of the five major food groups, including:
 - whole grains – lean sources of protein
 - fruits – low-fat/fat-free dairy foods
 - vegetables



Did you know?

- 26% of adults in the United States have tooth decay¹
- 46% of adults aged 30 years & older have signs of gum disease¹
- Oral cancers are more common in older people, particularly those who drink and/or smoke²
- Besides brushing, there are other tools to keep your mouth healthy like flossing and using mouthwash¹

Sources:

¹Centers for Disease Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/adult-oral-health/index.html> 2020. Accessed on August 2022

²American Cancer Society. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/oral-cavity-and-oropharyngeal-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>. 2022. Accessed August 2022

³American Dental Association. <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/b/brushing-your-teeth>. 2022. Accessed August 2022.

This information is for general informational purposes only and is not intended nor should be construed as medical advice. Individuals should consult an appropriate medical professional to determine what may be right for them.