

Tips for a Healthy Mouth

Positive oral health leads to improved overall health, which is why you should practice preventive care daily. Check out our tips to help everyone in your family maintain a healthy mouth.

For Babies & Toddlers

- Children should have their first dentist visit by their 1st birthday or as soon as their first tooth appears.
- Starting at birth, parents should gently brush a baby's gums after every feeding with either a baby toothbrush or a washcloth.

For Kids

- Kids aged 2-6 should use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste, with a little more for older children. Everyone, including kids, should brush their teeth twice a day for two minutes.
- Parents and caregivers should brush a young child's teeth again after a child brushes to ensure all teeth are reached.
- Children's teeth should be flossed once a day as soon as there are two teeth that touch each other. For younger children, parents should floss for them.
- To teach an older child to floss, take about 18 inches of floss and wrap it around the middle fingers on both hands, wrapping the floss around one finger as it is used. Or try flossers or water irrigators that may assist in developing lifelong oral hygiene habits.

For Teens

- Drink water to help dilute the acids in the mouth, protecting teeth from cavities.
- Limit beverage choices like sports drinks, coffee, diet sodas or regular sodas as they may increase the chances for tooth decay and obesity.
- Teen athletes should have a properly fitted mouthguard to reduce the number of sports-related oral injuries.

For Older Adults

- Older adults who have trouble swallowing can use less toothpaste when brushing (or none at all). The most important part is the actual act of brushing away food and plaque.
- Consider a child-sized toothbrush or electric toothbrush to accommodate dexterity impairments.
- Dentures should be cleaned every day and stored in water when not in use. Metal frames, acrylic and resin surfaces should be cleaned with a soft toothbrush and toothpaste, and rinsed in warm water.
- Ensure your dentist has an up-to-date list of your medications and medical conditions.

For the Whole Family

- Brush your teeth for two minutes, twice a day.
- Replace toothbrushes for the entire family every 3-4 months or sooner if the bristles show wear, or if the brusher has been sick.
- Eat a healthy diet full of fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid all tobacco products.
- Visit your dentist and dental hygienist twice a year for regular cleanings and checkups.

