

Health Tip

Healthy 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, **poor oral hygiene** poses a risk of dental complications to all generations. Poor oral hygiene is correlated with other diseases including heart disease, diabetes, pneumonia and rheumatoid arthritis.²

Risk factors for **oral cancer** are tobacco use, alcohol use, poor oral hygiene and human papilloma virus (HPV).

Gum disease develops when plaque is allowed to build up along and under the gum line. Warning signs include bad breath, tender, bleeding gums, loose teeth, receding gums and pain.



A healthy mouth for a lifetime includes:¹

- Regular dental visits
- Brush twice a day for at least 2 minutes and 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:

- 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?²

27%

of adults in the U.S.
have **tooth decay**.

46%

of adults
30 and older
have signs of
gum disease.

70%

of adults
65 and older have
periodontal disease.

Oral cancer affects

51,500

people in the U.S.
each year.

1. American Dental Association. <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/b/brushing-your-teeth>, accessed August 29, 2019.

2. Centers for Disease Control, <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/adult-oral-health/index.html>, accessed August 29, 2019.

The information provided in this flier 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.