

Oral Health is Overall Health



Take Good Care of Your Teeth and Gums

- Brush your teeth and tongue for two minutes at least twice a day.
- Use a toothbrush with soft bristles and brush gently so you do not damage your gums.
- Don't share toothbrushes.
- Get a new toothbrush every six months.
- Use fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between your teeth with dental floss at least once a day.
- Avoid tobacco products.
- Limit alcohol use.
- See a dentist at least once a year.
- Avoid sugary foods and drinks.

Avoid Tobacco for a Healthy Mouth

- Smokers are four times more likely to develop gum disease than non-smokers.
- Smokeless tobacco can contain sugar, which increases the risk of tooth decay.



Oral health problems can cause serious health issues like diabetes, heart disease, stroke and osteoporosis.

Diabetes

See a doctor to learn if you are at risk for diabetes. If so, keep your blood sugar level in your target range.

- Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to gum disease.
- Gum disease can also make it harder to control blood sugar levels.
- Some people with diabetes can have a dry mouth. This lack of saliva can lead to cavities. If you have a dry mouth:
 - Drink more water
 - Avoid sugary drinks
 - Use sugar-free gum or candy to keep saliva flowing

Heart Disease and Stroke

Healthy gums and teeth are important for a healthy heart, arteries and blood vessels.

- People with oral health problems are also at higher risk for having a heart attack or stroke.
- The plaque that develops on teeth is the same plaque that causes heart attacks.
- People with gum disease are twice as likely to have heart disease.
- People with gum disease are also at higher risk of having a stroke.

Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a disease that weakens bones; 80 percent of people with osteoporosis are women.

- Osteoporosis is linked to bone loss in the jaw, which can lead to tooth loss and a lowered ability to fight bacteria that cause gum disease.
- Osteoporosis is preventable by taking the recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D, exercising regularly and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol use.



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