

Adults

- Good oral health is important for good general health.
- Preventing tooth decay and gum disease starts at home.
- Brush with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, after breakfast and before bed with a soft toothbrush. Floss every night.
- Drink tap water that is optimally fluoridated. Fluoride is safe, effective, and keeps teeth strong.
- Sweet and starchy foods may cause tooth decay. Eat these foods at meal time. In between meals, snack on fresh fruits, vegetables, cheese, or nuts.
- Limit juice, soda (including diet), and sports drinks between meals.
- Healthy gums do not bleed. Bleeding is an early sign of gum disease. If you have bleeding gums, check your brushing and flossing, and visit a dental provider.
- Untreated gum disease may be a risk factor for heart and lung disease, stroke, and diabetes.



- ▶ Dry mouth can be caused by medications or health conditions and may lead to dental decay and difficulty in eating.
- ▶ To relieve dry mouth, use frequent sips of fluoridated water, a saliva substitute product, or sugar-free lozenges. Let your dental provider, physician, or pharmacist know if you have dry mouth.
- ▶ Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and recreational drugs. Smokers have more gum disease and oral cancer than non-smokers. Alcohol with smoking increases the risk for oral cancer. Meth use can lead to severe dental problems and complete tooth loss.
- ▶ Visit a dental provider before any radiation or chemotherapy treatments.
- ▶ Visit a dental provider for dental exams and oral cancer screenings even if you have no teeth and wear dentures. Dentists and dental hygienists are available in private dental offices, community health clinics, schools, and mobile vans.

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