

Tips for Good Oral Health



Five Steps to a Healthy Smile

1. Brush your teeth twice a day using a soft bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.
2. Get a new toothbrush every 3 months.
3. Floss your teeth every day to clean between your teeth where a toothbrush can't reach.
4. See a dentist at least once a year, even if you have no natural teeth or wear dentures.
5. Drink plenty of water, chew sugarless gum, don't use tobacco products, and limit alcoholic drinks.

Reasons to See Your Dentist at Least Once a Year

- Cleaning to remove stains and plaque from your teeth
- Checks for early signs of cancer in your mouth
- Checks to make sure your dentures are fitting okay
- Identifies problems before they become serious and cause pain or infection
- Helps prevent tooth loss due to loose teeth, cavities, infection, or gum disease
- Helps to check for other medical problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes
- Check for damage caused by bad habits such as chewing on ice, biting your nails, grinding your teeth and smoking



When to Contact Your Dentist with Concerns

- Chipped tooth
- Constant dull tooth pain
- Gums that bleed when you brush
- Red, tender, or swollen gums or sensitive teeth
- Cracked filling or a cap that comes off a tooth
- Problems with chewing or swallowing
- Changes in the way your dentures fit
- Sores in your mouth that don't heal
- Bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth that doesn't go away after brushing your teeth

TIP:

Most dentists leave an emergency number on their answering machine message for you to call if you have a serious dental problem after their business hours.

When to Call Your Dentist Right Away and Not Wait

- Broken tooth
- Loose or knocked out tooth
- Bleeding that won't stop
- Very painful or throbbing toothache
- Swollen cheek or painful swelling in your cheek or neck
- White bump on your gum that's getting bigger

When to Go to the Hospital Emergency Room

- When you are unable to reach your dentist after hours and have severe symptoms or pain
- Jaw fractures or dislocation
- Swelling that visibly spreads across the face and down the neck
- Serious tears, cuts, or punctures inside the cheeks, lips, or tongue
- Heavy bleeding in your mouth that won't stop
- If you have injured your head and also damaged your teeth and jaw

[More Information and Resources on Back](#)

Finding a Dentist

If you need help finding a dentist or are having problems getting an appointment with your dentist, please call 952-967-7998, TTY/TDD users call 952-967-7998

Transportation Assistance

HealthPartners Inpire SNBC offers Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) to and from dental appointments to qualified members for covered services. For more information, call 952-883-7400, TTY/TDD users call 952-883-7400

Oral Health Resources

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/health-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/dental/art-20045536?p=1>

http://seniorsoralhealth.org/oral-hygiene-guidelines-preventing-dental-disease/?doing_wp_cron=1498146603.2632050514221191406250

<https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/DevelopmentalDisabilities/DentalCareEveryDay.htm>

<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/dental-care-concerns/dental-emergencies>

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/oralhealth/links.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/adult-oral-health/tips.html>

