



What Is Daily Oral Health Care?

Oral health means much more than healthy teeth; it means being free of chronic pain, cancers, lesions, birth defects (such as cleft lip and palate), and scores of other diseases and disorders that affect the oral, dental, and craniofacial tissues. It requires education, daily oral hygiene (which includes brushing and flossing), and good nutrition. Also, oral health is essential to general health. You cannot be healthy without good oral health.

<http://www.dhss.mo.gov/oralhealth/>

Talk with your dentist, other oral health care specialist, or hygienist about any special conditions in your mouth and any ways in which your medical/health conditions affect your teeth or oral health. For example, people with special conditions - such as pregnancy, diabetes and other underlying diseases, orthodontic appliances - may require additional instruction and perhaps treatments to keep their mouth healthy. Be sure to tell your dentist if you have experienced a change in your general health or in any medications you are taking since your last dental visit.

Based on discussions with your dentist, other oral health care specialist, and hygienist and considering your unique general health and oral health situations, develop an oral health routine that is easy to follow on a daily basis. Make sure you understand the additional care and/or treatment needed, commit to the extra tasks, and work them into your daily health routine.

<http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/guide/oral-health-care-plan>

Brushing

Teeth should be brushed twice a day with an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste. Replace your toothbrush every three or four months, or sooner if the bristles are frayed. A worn toothbrush will not do a good job of cleaning your teeth. Use a small amount of toothpaste, about the size of a pea. The best toothpaste has fluoride and the American Dental Association's Seal of Acceptance.

Flossing

Clean between your teeth with floss or an inter-dental cleaner. Decay-causing bacteria still linger between teeth where toothbrush bristles cannot reach. This helps remove plaque and food particles from between the teeth and under the gum line. Work the floss gently between the teeth to the gumline. Curve the floss around each tooth and slip it under the gum. Slide the floss up and down.

Rinsing

Anti-microbial mouth rinses and toothpastes reduce the bacterial count and inhibit bacterial activity in dental plaque, which can cause gingivitis, an early, reversible form of periodontal (gum) disease. ADA-Accepted anti-microbial mouth rinses and toothpastes have substantiated these claims by demonstrating significant reductions in plaque and gingivitis. Fluoride mouth rinses help reduce and prevent tooth decay. Clinical studies have demonstrated that use of a fluoride mouth rinse and fluoride toothpaste can provide extra protection against tooth decay over that provided by fluoride toothpaste alone. Fluoride mouth rinse is not recommended for children age six or younger because they may swallow the rinse. Consumers should always check the manufacturer's label for precautions and age recommendations and talk with their dentist about the use of fluoride mouth rinse.

<http://www.ada.org/public/topics/cleaning.asp>

Irrigation

Irrigation is an essential part of your daily oral care program. It is a process that enables you to dilute, disperse, and eradicate harmful germs from your teeth and gums by forcing a pulsating jet of warm water between the teeth and gums. Dental irrigation flushes microorganisms from spaces other tools cannot reach.

<http://www.mamagums.com/products.html>

Fluoride

Children and adults benefit from fluoride use. Fluoride strengthens developing teeth in children and prevents tooth decay in both children and adults. Fluoride levels in tap water may not be high enough without supplementation to prevent tooth decay. Contact your water utility to determine the level for your area. Talk with your dentist about your fluoride needs. Ask if fluoride supplements or a higher strength, prescription-only fluoride product is necessary for you.

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The older adult may need additional fluoride, often available as a fluoride rinse or gel. Some products are available over-the-counter, while others are in prescription concentrations. Ask the dentist if a fluoride product would be helpful.

<http://www.netwellness.org/healthtopics/dentalseniors/oralhygieneroutine.cfm>