

CELEBRATE DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

A healthy mouth is critical to maintaining general health. Often conditions such as diabetes or heart disease, and some medicines can lead to oral health problems. Regular dental care keeps teeth and gums healthy and prevents problems as we age.

Brush and floss your teeth every day.

Brushing and flossing helps remove dental plaque, a sticky film of bacteria which can cause tooth decay or gum disease.

- Brush after breakfast and before bed.
- Floss between your teeth every day.



Watch for changes in your mouth.

See a doctor or dentist if you have any of these symptoms for more than 2 weeks:

- A spot in your mouth, lip, or throat that feels uncomfortable or sore
- A lump or thick area in your mouth, lip, or throat
- A white or red patch in your mouth
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, or moving your jaw or tongue
- Numbness in your tongue or mouth, swelling in your jaw, pain in one ear without hearing loss

See your dentist regularly for a checkup and cleaning.



There's no single rule for how often people need to see the dentist - it varies from person to person. The next time you get a checkup and cleaning, ask your dentist how often you need to come in.

Talk to your doctor about dry mouth.

Dry mouth means not having enough saliva (spit) to keep your mouth wet. This can make it hard to eat, swallow, or talk. It can also lead to tooth decay or infection. Dry mouth is a side effect of some medicines. It can also happen if you have certain health problems (like diabetes) or if you're getting chemotherapy or radiation (treatments for cancer).

Practice healthy habits.

- Eat healthy and cut down on sugary foods and drinks. This can help prevent tooth decay.
- Don't smoke or use other tobacco products. Use of such products puts you at higher risk for oral cancer and gum disease.
- If you drink alcohol, drink only in moderation. Excess drinking increases your risk of oral cancer.

Source: healthfinders.gov

