

Preventative Daily Oral Health Care

Decay, Gum Disease, Nutritional Habits:

Many of the foods you eat cause bacteria, that is already in your mouth, to produce acids. Sugared foods, such as candy and cookies are not the only culprits. Starches, such as bread, crackers, and cereal also cause acids to form. If you snack often, you could be having acid attacks all day long. After many acids attacks, your teeth may decay. Avoid snacking or sipping on a sugary drink all day long. It is far better to eat the candy or drink the soft drink in 15 minutes than it is to nibble or sip on it all day long.

Plaque also produces substances that irritate the gums, making them red, tender or bleed easily. After a while, gums may pull away from the teeth, pockets form and fill with more bacteria and pus. If the gums are not treated, the bone around the teeth can be destroyed. The teeth may become loose or may need to be removed. In fact, gum disease is the main cause of tooth loss in adults.

What is daily oral health care?

The best way to prevent decay and gum disease causing plaque is by brushing, and flossing between your teeth every day. Brushing and flossing removes the plaque that forms on teeth. Cleaning between the teeth once a day with floss or interdental cleaners removes plaque from between the teeth, areas where the toothbrush can't reach. It is essential in preventing gum disease and decay. (This is especially important if you have bridges, crowns and /or implants. By having good oral hygiene, eating a balanced diet and visiting your dentist regularly, you can have healthy teeth and a attractive smile your entire life.

Brushing:

* Brush 2 times a day, with a **SOFT** bristled brush. The size & shape of your brush should fit your mouth, allowing you to reach all areas.

* Place the toothbrush and a 45 degree angle to the gums line. Move the brush back and forth gently in short (tooth-wide) strokes. If you have gum disease, slide the tooth brush bristles under the gum and vibrate the bristle slightly. If bleeding occurs it means that plaque has irritated the gums and is causing bleeding. After a few weeks of proper brushing and flossing, the bleeding should stop. Be careful not to brush too hard, you don't want to cause trauma to your the gums or teeth.

* Brush the outer and inner tooth surfaces using the brush in a gentle up and down stroke and back and forth motion.

* Remember to brush your tongue as far back on the tongue as possible without gagging yourself to remove bacteria on the tongue.

Flossing:

* Break off about 18 inches of floss & wind the most of it around one of your middle fingers. Wind the remaining floss around the same finger on the opposite hand. This finger will take up the floss as it becomes dirty. Hold the floss tightly between your thumbs and forefingers.

Guide the floss between your teeth using a gentle rubbing motion. Never snap the floss into the gums, for snapping the floss will cut the gums.

* When the floss reaches the gumline, curve it into a "C-shape" against one tooth. Gently slide it into the space between the gum and the tooth. Hold the floss tightly against the tooth. Gently rub the side of the tooth, moving the floss away from the gum in an upward motion.

Repeat this method on ALL your teeth. *Don't forget the back side of the last tooth.

*People who have difficulty handling dental floss may prefer to use another kind of interdental cleaner. These aids include special brushed, picks, flossers or sticks. If you use interdental cleaners, ask your dentist about how to use them properly, to avoid injuring your gums.

Toothpaste:

Use a toothpaste that contains fluoride, which helps protect your teeth from decay. **If a child can't spit out the toothpaste then use a toothpaste that doesn't contain fluoride.** When choosing any dental product, look for the ADA Seal Of Acceptance, an important symbol of a dental product's safety and effectiveness.

* Do not use baking soda out of commercial brand baking soda boxes. Do not use peroxide out of the commercial brand bottles!

Mouthwashes:

***Listerine** is good for killing germs that cause gum disease and bad breath.

***Act** is a red fluoride rinse that help prevent cavities.

***Salt Water** (8oz of warm water and 1 table spoon of salt) helps in decreasing the amount of bacteria in the mouth and helps gums to heal from deep dental cleanings, stress ulcers, trauma (such as biting your cheeks or tongue) and after dental surgery of any kind.

Using the Red Disclosing Tablets or Disclosing Liquid:

1. Brush and floss your teeth, and then rinse thoroughly!
2. Take one tablet and chew it up to very small pieces and let it dissolve in your mouth (DO NOT SWALLOW!!)
3. Swish the dissolved pieces in the mouth for 1 minute making sure you cover all front and all back teeth. Spit out into sink or toilet.
4. (Immediately rinse out the red solution from the sink/toilet so the red solution doesn't stain the sink/toilet!)
5. Look in a mirror at your teeth. The red solution will color all the plaque on your teeth red and pink.
6. This shows you all the areas of plaque that you missed the first time you brushed and flossed.
7. Use your toothbrush and floss to remove all the red and pink plaque off your teeth. When all red and pink areas are gone you know that you have removed all the plaque from your teeth.
8. Pay very close attention to how you move the toothbrush and floss in order to remove the red and pink plaque so that you are sure to move the tooth brush and floss the same way when you don't have the red disclosing tablet to help you find the plaque!

*** See your dentist every 6 months for a check-up and cleaning unless told otherwise by your dentist!**