

How can I keep a healthy mouth?



Visit the dentist at least twice a year, even if your teeth look and feel fine.

Let your dentist know of any medical problems you may have.



Use fluoride toothpaste. Brush your teeth and gums at least twice a day. Make sure that you sleep with a clean mouth.



Brushing and regular visits to the dentist should start when the baby teeth are present in the mouth.



Make sure all the family follows a balanced diet. Avoid sugary and sticky snacks.



Information compiled by the **Dental Public Health Unit**
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Taking care of your mouth

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Teeth for Life

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General information on dental health

Good oral health is an essential part of general health. Lack of good care of our mouth might contribute to heart and lung problems, diabetes and stroke.



The most common oral health problems are:

- Tooth decay
- Gum disease
- Tooth wear
- Hypersensitivity
- Dry mouth
- Tooth discolouration

Tooth decay

Dental plaque is a sticky layer that is continuously forming on your teeth. It is made up of approximately 400 different types of bacteria.

Certain bacteria found in plaque convert sugars and starches into acid which dissolves the tooth substance causing tooth decay.

Avoid sugary snacks in between meals since this increases the risk of tooth decay.

Gum disease

Gum disease (gingivitis) also begins with plaque formation on the teeth. This is extremely common especially in adults, but can also be found in children and teenagers.

Bacteria in plaque can irritate the gums and cause them to become red and swollen and bleed easily.

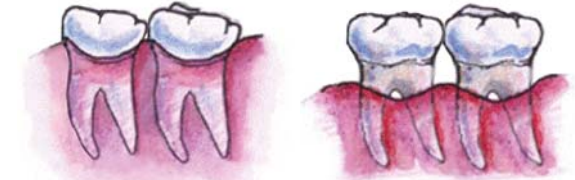
If this is neglected it may result in a more severe form of gum disease (periodontitis) which can lead to teeth becoming loose and eventually falling out.

Tooth wear

This can be brought about by external mechanical forces like incorrect toothbrushing (abrasion) or as a result of acid attack from frequent consumption of acidic foods and drinks (erosion).

Hypersensitivity

This is pain resulting from tooth roots or dentine (the inner substance of the tooth) becoming more exposed due to receding gums, erosion and abrasion. Treatment recommendations include the use of fluoride mouthrinses and toothpastes for sensitive teeth.



Healthy gums

Receding gums

Dry mouth (Xerostomia)

This occurs for a number of reasons, the most common being medications taken and radiation treatments. A dry mouth increases the risk of tooth decay. If suffering from this condition, sip water frequently and use a non-foaming toothpaste or a toothpaste for dry mouth. Chewing sugar-free gum helps stimulate salivary flow. Saliva substitutes are also available.

Tooth discolouration

Frequent consumption of stain-inducing foods and drinks like coffee and tea can cause discolouration of teeth. Smoking can also stain teeth.

