

Healthy People Dental

TEENS AND TEETH

Your smile is one of the first things people notice about you. That's why it's so important to take care of it. Cavities aren't just for little kids—you can get them at any age. When you consume sugary foods, soda, juice or energy drinks, you put yourself at risk for tooth decay and gum disease. Be smart. Always brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes and floss once a day. Always see your dentist on a regular basis!

Brushing and Flossing

Want to avoid cavities? Brushing twice a day with toothpaste, flossing once a day, and limiting sugary snacks and beverages is how you do it. It's simple but sometimes life gets busy and you might be tempted to skip it. Don't.

Sealants

Dental sealants are a type of special plastic coating that act as a barrier, protecting cavity-prone areas. They are usually applied to the chewing surfaces of back teeth and are sometimes used to cover deep pits and grooves in other teeth. Sealing a tooth is fast and easy. As long as the sealant remains intact, the tooth surface will be protected from decay. Sealants hold up well under the force of normal chewing but sometimes a reapplication is needed.

Mouth guards

If you play a sport or are active in things like skateboarding or snowboarding, it's a good idea to wear a mouth guard. It may feel funny at first, but mouth guards are the best thing you can do to protect your teeth from getting broken or knocked out. They cushion blows that would otherwise cause injuries to the lips and face and sometimes even jaw fractures. Ask your dentist which mouth guard is the right one for you.

Braces

If you have a bad bite or your teeth are crooked or out of alignment, you may benefit from braces. Braces can help improve your smile and make your teeth straighter. They can also improve your dental health and overall health because untreated orthodontic problems can make it hard to bite and chew and can interfere with eating.

Wisdom Teeth

Wisdom teeth, also referred to as third molars, get their name by being the last teeth to come in during young adulthood, the time of life when you gain maturity or "wisdom." The majority of people have most of their permanent teeth by age 13. Your wisdom teeth should come into your mouth between the ages of 17-21. Sometimes they do not have enough room to come in normally or are in the wrong position to come straight up. When that happens, your dentist may refer to them as impacted and they may have to be removed.

Smoking

You know smoking is bad for you in general, so it should be no surprise that all forms of tobacco are also harmful to your oral health. For one, they can cause bad breath, but that's only the beginning. Other possible oral health impacts include: stained teeth and tongue, dulled sense of taste and smell, slow healing after oral surgery, gum disease and tooth loss, and oral cancer. Quitting is the only way to decrease your risk of these and other tobacco-related health problems. The addictive quality of nicotine, which is found in cigarettes, cigars and chewing tobacco, can make this especially difficult. That's why it's important to have a plan and a support network, people to help you stick to your plan.

Mouth Jewelry

Oral piercings or tongue splitting may look cool, but they can be dangerous to your health. That's because your mouth contains millions of bacteria, and infection and swelling often occur with mouth piercings. For instance, your mouth and tongue could swell so much that you close off your airway or you could possibly choke if part of the jewelry breaks off in your mouth. In some cases, you could crack a tooth if you bite down too hard on the piercing and repeated clicking of the jewelry against teeth can also cause damage. An infected oral piercing can also lead to more serious systemic infections, including hepatitis or endocarditis.

Healthy Mouth Recipe

Strawberry-Lemon Sorbet

1 quart fresh strawberries, washed, stemmed)
5-10 drops stevia to taste
1/4 cup lemon-flavored seltzer (or plain seltzer with 2 drops of pure lemon essential oil)

Place washed and stemmed strawberries in the freezer until hardened. In a blender or food processor, add the frozen strawberries and pulse until fruit is reduced to chunks. Add seltzer, and lemon essential oil (if using) and 5 drops of stevia. Continue to blend until very smooth. Taste for sweetness and add more stevia if desired.



Smile Tip: Strawberries are great "scrubbers" and high in fiber. Lemon assists with pH balance in the body. Stevia is a natural sweetener and does not have an "acid effect" like sugar on your teeth. The vitamin C in strawberries supports gum and mouth tissue.

