

# Caring for Your Teeth

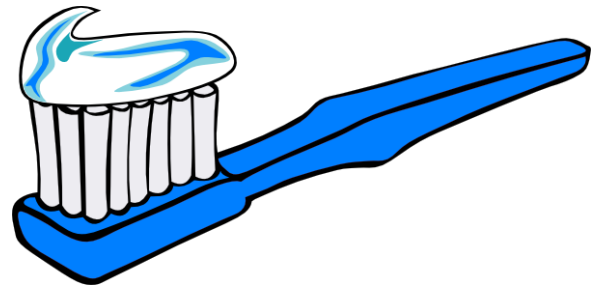
Oral health is directly linked to your overall health. Bacteria thrive in the mouth as it is a perfect environment for them to grow and can cause oral health problems, such as tooth decay and gum disease. Bacteria can enter the bloodstream and contribute to health problems in other parts of the body.

Good oral hygiene is essential for maintaining overall health and well-being. Routine brushing, flossing, and dental check-ups help remove plaque and bacteria to prevent oral health problems and reduce the risk of serious health issues. Here is everything you and your family need to know for good oral health:

## Tools of the Trade

### Toothbrush

Use a toothbrush with soft bristles.  
Replace toothbrush or electric toothbrush head every *3 months*.  
*Do not share* toothbrushes and other mouth care tools.



### Toothpaste

Avoid toothpastes with harmful chemicals, namely *sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS)* and artificial colors and sweeteners.



### Floss

Use floss to remove bacteria below the gum line and sides of *all* teeth – do not neglect teeth and gums at the back of mouth.  
To promote gum health, you can also try a gum massaging tool to increase blood flow to gum tissues.



## Tips for Teeth, Tongue and Gums



**Consistency is key.** Brush teeth first thing in the morning and before you go to bed at night.

**Brush your tongue** – it houses most of the harmful bacteria in your mouth.



**Rinse with a warm saltwater mixture** to reduce mouth bacteria, soothe gums and reduce tooth sensitivity.

**Avoid hard, sticky foods.** It is important to be careful with your teeth when seeing the dentist is not an option.



### When should I call my dentist?

If you are experiencing any oral health issues, such as toothache, swollen or bleeding gums, loose teeth or oral pain, do not wait to call your dentist! Addressing these problems early can prevent more serious issues.

Many dentists have also adopted telehealth practices to virtually communicate with patients. Your dentist may assess your problem over phone call or video chat and determine if you need to visit the office.



#### Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Oral Health Tips for Adults. <https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/prevention/oral-health-tips-for-adults.html>.

Colgate-Palmolive. What is Good Oral Hygiene? <https://www.colgate.com/en-us/oral-health/adult-oral-care/what-is-good-oral-hygiene#>