

Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



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Dental Hygiene

If you don't clean your teeth well every day, you're putting yourself at risk for tooth decay.

The effects of poor dental care range from tooth decay and cavities to gingivitis, periodontitis, and tooth loss. Fortunately, proper dental care, including cleaning teeth correctly and regularly, can prevent most of these problems.

When the carbohydrates in the food and drinks that you consume aren't cleaned from the teeth regularly, they provide fuel for cavity-causing bacteria. These bacteria can start forming plaque on teeth within 20 minutes of eating, so if you're a frequent snacker, you may want to clean your teeth more often than twice a day. The truth is, bacteria are almost always present in the mouth and frequent cleaning — and limiting sugary foods — may help prevent decay.



The Truth About Sugar and Tooth Decay

Sugar has a bad reputation when it comes to teeth, and for good reason. It fuels bacteria and acid production in your mouth, causing plaque to form and eat away at your teeth and gums. Your chompers are hit with up to 20 minutes of acid production for every sugar-fest you indulge in, from sweetened coffee in the morning to ice cream at night.

The solution? It's all about sucrose discipline, to help you avoid dental decay --a problem that 20% of people in the United States face every time they look in the mirror. Cut down on the sugar, and brush

and floss twice a day to keep those pearly whites clean and acids under control.

Four Things Your Dentist Wants You to Do Now!

Are your pearly whites starting to look not so pearly? Want to jump-start the health of your pearly whites?

An assistant professor of general dentistry speaks for dentists everywhere when he lists four things you can do right now for a mouth that looks and feels fabulous.

Kick the habit. Need another person in your life to explain why you need to quit smoking? Talk to

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Dental Hygiene

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your dentist. The nicotine and tar in cigarettes are not only turning your teeth an unsightly shade of yellow, but they're eating away at your gums. Smoking creates a ripe environment for bacteria and plaque on your teeth and along the gum lines. And that harms tissue and eventually increases your risk of tooth loss. Tobacco chemicals can also cause mouth sores that could turn into cancer.

Pay a visit. If you're prone to ditching the dentist, it turns out you're part of the roughly 50% of adults in the United States who don't see a dentist on a yearly basis because of "dentist-phobia,"

finances, or just plain neglect. Regular trips to the dentist can catch problems such as decay, gum disease, trauma, or cancer at an early stage when they're treatable -- and solutions are more affordable.

Brush right. Is your brushing technique below par? Maybe you don't brush often enough -- or worse, at all? It takes only about two minutes to properly clean your teeth and gums. Angle the brush 45 degrees toward your gum line, and use gentle, circular strokes. Make sure the bristles on the brush aren't bending; if they are, you're brushing too hard and wearing down your teeth and gums. Plaque is soft, and will

brush away easily with light strokes.

Finesse flossing. Flossing is fundamental to keeping teeth and gums clean -- but only if you do it right. Snapping and popping your way through the process probably does more harm than good, causing friction on tissue and damage at the gum line. Instead, use about two inches of floss between your fingers, unroll a fresh section of floss for each tooth, and keep the floss tight against your tooth to break up plaque while leaving your gums in good shape.

Developing good dental health habits is the best way to prevent tooth decay and gum disease..

Sources: WebMD.com.

Recommended Dental Care Routine



Keep your teeth clean and cavity-free by following a regular dental care routine of twice-daily tooth brushing and daily flossing.



Visit your dentist and dental hygienist at least once a year for a professional cleaning and assessment to catch any problems before they become serious.



Your dentist or dental hygienist might also recommend a particular type of toothbrush, dental floss, or oral rinse to help you get the most out of your daily dental care routine.

Benefits Corner

Announcement

As a reminder for CHP participants enrolled in the CHP Dental Plans, take advantage of your benefit and don't forget to schedule your cleanings every 6 months.

CHP Dental Plan A and B

Diagnostic and Preventive Services (no deductible)(100%)

- Oral evaluations
- X-rays
- Cleanings
- Space maintainers
- Other selected diagnostic and preventive services