

Good Oral Health



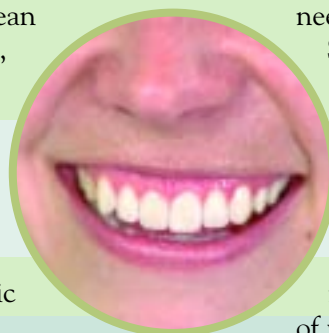
FIVE STEPS TO GOOD ORAL HEALTH AND OVERALL HEALTH

Research shows that a healthy mouth is an important part of a healthy body. As part of a healthy lifestyle and to help reduce the risk of oral disease, follow these 5 steps to good oral health:

1. Brush your teeth and tongue twice a day and floss once a day.
2. Eat a well-balanced diet.
3. Check your mouth regularly for signs of gum disease such as tender gums or bleeding when you brush or floss. If you have any of these signs, let your dentist know.
4. Don't smoke or chew tobacco.
5. Have your mouth examined regularly by your dentist.

DON'T IGNORE YOUR MOUTH

While an infection elsewhere in the body would mean a trip to the physician, we often ignore infections in our mouths. The fact is oral diseases can cause serious problems and many can aggravate systemic conditions. Like any



other disease, oral diseases need to be treated. So don't ignore your bleeding or tender gums. Have your mouth examined regularly by your dentist. After all, your oral health is an important part of your overall health.

PREVENT EARLY CHILDHOOD TOOTH DECAY Bring your toddler to the dentist

As part of preventing early childhood tooth decay, the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) recommends bringing your child to the dentist 6 months after his or her first tooth has arrived and no later than your child's first birthday. Early childhood tooth decay is a serious disease found in the teeth of infants and toddlers. Once your child has teeth, he or she is at risk. The good news is early childhood tooth decay is preventable. Here are some tips:

- ◆ Never put your child to bed with a bottle or sippy cup of any liquid other than water.
- ◆ Wipe your baby's gums and teeth (if there are any) with a damp cloth every day. If possible, brush your baby's teeth with a baby-size toothbrush.
- ◆ Check your child's teeth once a week for signs of tooth decay such as dull or chalking white spots or lines, brown spots or dark teeth.

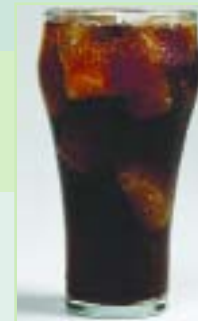
If you have any concerns about whether your child shows any signs of early childhood tooth decay, talk to your child's dentist.



PREVENTING DENTAL EROSION

Dental erosion occurs when the hard part of the tooth dissolves as a result of direct contact with acid. Although it can be caused by certain health conditions, eating and drinking foods high in acid such as sport drinks and soft drinks can also cause teeth to erode. Here are some tips to prevent dental erosion:

- ◆ Choose drinks that are low in acid. Carbonated soft drinks and sports drinks are high in acid, which can harm your teeth.



- ◆ Do not swish or hold high acid drinks in your mouth for long periods of time and do not suck on citrus fruits.

- ◆ It is best to consume foods and drinks high in acid at the end of mealtime while there is still plenty of saliva in your mouth to wash away acids.

If you have any concerns about dental erosion, talk to your dentist. Your dentist can determine if your teeth show any signs of dental erosion.

Oral health and pregnancy

If you're pregnant, it is more important than ever to take care of your teeth and gums to prevent periodontal disease. Periodontal disease is an inflammation of the gums or bone and soft tissues around our teeth. Some recent studies have suggested that pregnant women are more susceptible to certain kinds of periodontal diseases and that certain types of this disease could lead to the birth of pre-term and low-birth-weight (PLBW) babies. Fortunately, periodontal disease can be prevented. And if it has started, periodontal disease can be treated. To prevent this disease, keep your mouth clean and healthy by brushing your teeth twice daily and flossing once a day. More importantly, have your mouth examined regularly by your dentist. Your dentist can identify and treat periodontal disease to help you reduce your risk of having a PLBW baby.



Do you need a dental checkup?

All of us need regular dental checkups. Even if you have dental implants or wear dentures, your dentist needs to check them out. During a checkup, your dentist not only looks for cavities, he or she also looks for oral disease, infection, early signs of oral cancer, and signs of other problems that could affect your general health. Regular visits to the dentist are a vital part of maintaining a healthy mouth. You and your dentist are partners in keeping your oral health good for life.



Look for the Seal

Consumers have an endless array of choice when it comes to selecting toothbrushes, floss and toothpaste. To help you make informed choices, the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) has developed a Consumer Product Recognition Program. Products that have earned the CDA Seal of Recognition have been reviewed by CDA and will effectively contribute to your oral health. For a list of recognized products, visit the CDA website at www.cda-adc.ca.

