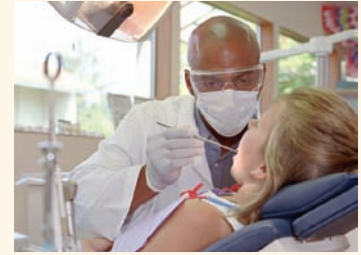


Good Oral Health

FIVE STEPS TO GOOD ORAL HEALTH[®]

A healthy mouth is an important part of a healthy body. To help you keep your mouth healthy, follow these 5 steps to good oral health:

- 1. Keep your mouth clean** by brushing and flossing every day. Daily brushing and flossing helps remove plaque, which is the main culprit behind cavities and gum disease. Your dentist may also recommend a fluoride or antimicrobial mouthrinse.
- 2. Eat, drink, but be wary.** Healthy food is good for both your oral health and overall health. The nutrients that come from healthy foods help you to fight cavities and gum disease. Limit how much and how often you consume food and beverages high in sugar or acid. Sugar is one of the main causes of dental problems and acid may play a part in causing dental erosion.
- 3. Check your mouth regularly** for warning signs of gum disease and report these to your dentist. These warning signs include red, shiny, puffy, sore, sensitive or bleeding gums, loose or sensitive teeth and persistent bad breath.
- 4. Avoid all tobacco products.** Tobacco use, including smokeless tobacco, is a major cause of tooth loss and oral cancer. If you use tobacco, ask your dentist for advice on how to quit.
- 5. Have your mouth examined regularly** by your dentist to prevent problems or to stop small problems from getting worse. Your dentist has the training, skills and expertise to diagnose and treat oral diseases and to meet all of your oral health care needs.



Taking a look at oral cancer

We don't hear a lot about oral cancer, yet more than 3,000 Canadians are diagnosed with this life-threatening disease every year. The good news is that when it is detected early, oral cancer has an 80% to 90% survival rate. Early detection means seeing your dentist regularly for checkups. Dentists have the right equipment, proper lighting and specialized training to detect oral cancer.

Factors that can increase the risk of oral cancer are tobacco use and alcohol abuse. To help reduce the risk of oral cancer, stop using all forms of tobacco and reduce or stop drinking alcohol. However, not all oral cancer patients share these habits so it's important for everyone to know the warning signs.

Although oral cancer can appear on your lips or anywhere in your mouth (including your throat), the 3 most common sites are the sides and bottom of your tongue and the floor of your mouth. The warning signs of oral cancer may include white or red patches, small lumps and thickening, numbness or tingling, sores that bleed easily or won't heal, pain or problems swallowing and persistent earaches. If you notice any of these warning signs, report them to your dentist right away.

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DENTIST?

Being nervous about visiting the dentist can be an obstacle to receiving the care you need. To help overcome your fear, meet with your dentist and tell him or her exactly what it is you are nervous about. By identifying your concerns, your dentist can suggest coping strategies and help you manage these concerns.

Often past personal experiences or the experience of someone close to you may be the root of your fear. A better understanding of modern dentistry may help alleviate these worries. Today's technology and equipment have revolutionized treatment such that it can be a virtually pain-free experience.

Not knowing what to expect can also cause anxiety in some people. It's easy to be afraid of something you don't know about. To help overcome this anxiety, find out exactly what your treatment involves. Getting the facts about your particular treatment can save a lot of needless worry.

Delaying treatment because of fear is common. However, even a minor oral health problem can become a serious and complicated problem if left untreated. If you suffer from dental anxiety, talk to your dentist about how you can overcome this barrier and have a healthy smile for life.

Tips for dealing with dental anxiety

To help deal with dental anxiety, your dentist may suggest the following:

- Do not consume caffeine or sugar before a dental appointment, as they can make you feel anxious.
- Make your appointment early in the day so you feel less rushed and less stressed.
- During your appointment, think about relaxing. Breathe regularly and slowly.
- During your procedure, let your dentist know if you are feeling uncomfortable by using hand signals.



Look who's wearing braces now

It's not uncommon to see teenagers wearing braces, but today an increasing number of adults are considering orthodontic treatment to straighten their teeth and their bite. After all, teeth can be moved at any age. If you wear braces, proper brushing and flossing are even more important because plaque can easily build up around the edges of your braces. If this plaque is not properly removed, white or brown marks may appear on the enamel surface of your teeth and these marks may be permanent. It's also important to visit your general dentist as well as going to the orthodontist. While your orthodontist will check your braces, your general dentist will check your mouth for any signs of tooth decay or other oral health problems. Correcting a bad bite and straightening teeth can improve the look and health of your smile.

ORAL HEALTH RESOURCES

As the national voice for dentistry, the Canadian Dental Association works in collaboration with the provincial and territorial dental associations to promote optimal oral health for all Canadians. For more oral health information, ask your dentist and visit the websites of your national and provincial dental associations.

Canadian Dental Association: www.cda-adc.ca

British Columbia Dental Association: www.bcdental.org

Alberta Dental Association and College: www.abda.ab.ca

College of Dental Surgeons of Saskatchewan: www.saskdentists.com

Manitoba Dental Association: www.ManitobaDentist.ca

Ontario Dental Association: www.youroralhealth.ca

Order of Dentists of Quebec: www.odq.qc.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Association: www.nlda.net

New Brunswick Dental Society: www.nbdental.com

Dental Association of Prince Edward Island: www.dapei.ca

Nova Scotia Dental Association: www.healthyteeth.org

and www.nsdental.org

