

Adult Dental Care

When performing daily oral hygiene (brushing 2x/day, flossing daily), consider the following:

- Don't forget to clean your tongue too! Tongue scrapers can be helpful.
- If you have increased risk of gum disease, consider mouth rinse or toothpaste that says antibacterial on the label.
- If you have an increased risk of cavities, consider mouth rinse with fluoride.
- For patients that struggle to clean between their teeth, consider what interdental cleaning tool might be best. Some examples are interdental brushes, piks, or a Waterpik™.
- If you want or need improved plaque removal, consider a power toothbrush.

Other special considerations:

- Avoid tobacco products.
- Eat healthy foods and have less frequent sugary or acidic drinks and snacks.
- Visit your dental provider regularly. Every 6 months is recommended for adults with healthy gums and teeth, but you may need more frequent visits.
- Discuss any medications you are taking with your dentist and primary care provider. Many medications may have oral side effects including dry mouth, which can lead to cavities.

WARNING SIGNS OF POOR ORAL HEALTH

- Red, swollen, tender or bleeding gums
- Bad breath that won't go away
- Loose teeth
- Sensitive or sore teeth or gums
- Receding gums (gums that pull away from the teeth)
- Dry mouth
- Long-lasting mouth sores

Maine Oral Health Resources

FindHelp

www.findhelp.org

From the First Tooth

www.fromthefirsttooth.org

211 Maine

www.211maine.org

Children's Oral Health Network

www.maineconh.org

Spruce the Dental Health Moose says...



Protect the Smile You Love!



How to Make Brushing FUN

Brushing your child's teeth isn't always easy or fun, but it gets better. Keeping baby teeth healthy is important because it supports proper chewing, speech development, and strong adult teeth.

- Children like to copy others, so ask other family members, including older children in the house, to show-off how they brush. Examples could be: brushing while making a sad face, brushing while balancing on one foot, brushing with your eyes closed, etc.
- If your child doesn't like the taste of toothpaste, try brushing without paste first. Then start with a small amount to begin, or try a different flavor.
- Try using 2 toothbrushes: One for them to hold and use and one for you to brush properly. Children respond to "your turn, my turn", where the child brushes first then the parent brushes.
- Dental-themed story books can be used to help teach young children about brushing.
- Try brushing in various locations around the house.



Try playing a fun brushing video found here:



Dental Care at Home

Infant & Child 0-9 years

- Before your baby has teeth, clean their mouth with a washcloth every day.
- As soon as your baby has teeth, brush 2 times daily with a rice-sized smear of toothpaste that has fluoride for ages 0-2. Use a pea-sized smear for ages 3-5.
- Allow children to practice brushing their own teeth but know they still need help to be effective until ages 6-8.
- Flossing between teeth is necessary. Encourage children to start early to set a healthy habit.

Feeding

- Milk, formula, juices, soda, and breast milk all have sugar in them that can puddle around a sleeping baby's teeth and cause decay.
- Limit their exposure to sugars, including fruit juice, and only use water at bedtime.

Prevention

- Germs that can cause cavities can be transferred from adults to babies, so don't share anything with your baby that can transmit germs. For example, avoid sharing your spoon.
- Dental checks should occur by age 1 with your dentist or medical doctor.
- Play your part in the prevention of cavities by looking at your child's teeth for signs of decay. Encourage brushing and flossing.
- Ask your doctor about fluoride varnish and water testing for fluoride content.

Adolescence 10-18 years

- Brush twice a day with toothpaste that has fluoride.
- Floss once a day and use a mouth rinse with fluoride that has been recommended by your dentist/hygienist.
- Sealants help prevent cavities on permanent molars, which come in around ages 6 and 12. Ask your dentist about this treatment or check if your child's school has an oral health program that provides them.
- Wisdom teeth (3rd molars)-may erupt between the ages of 17-21. Often there is not enough room, and they are impacted. Don't delay treatment, this can be damaging to surrounding teeth and very painful.
- Eating disorders can harm your oral health. Without proper nutrition, you may experience bleeding gums, dry mouth, erosion of the enamel, fractured enamel, and change of tooth color.
- Smoking/vaping can cause the following:
 - Stained tongue and teeth which may lead to cosmetic difficulties
 - Gum disease or tooth loss
 - Oral cancer