

TIPS FOR A HEALTHY MOUTH

by Sean Tarpenning, DDS

If you think about it, your mouth is one of the parts of your body that is almost always in constant use. You use it to eat, talk, breathe, etc., and if it is diseased or has been afflicted with a variety of health problems, it can be quite embarrassing and limiting. When you have a tooth ache or canker sore, for example, not much else seems to matter! Because of this, and so much more, having a healthy mouth is essential to your well-being, confidence, and your overall wellness.

Benefits and Beyond

There are many problems that can arise by not taking the time to strive for a healthy mouth. Gingivitis, which is a type of periodontal disease, destroys a person's gums, the surrounding tissue, and even the tooth sockets. To prevent things like dental carries or cavities, as well as gingivitis, it is important to maintain a healthy mouth. And doing so is actually easier than you may think, providing you keep a few things in mind!

Throughout the years, there are various tips for the ages and stages that people go through, with things all along the way that contribute to a healthy mouth. Here are some tips for getting and keeping a healthy mouth:

- When it comes to infants, avoid putting them to bed with a bottle. It's also beneficial to try to keep shared utensils away from them, so they don't get additional germs in their mouth.
- At any age of life, it is important to establish a healthy oral hygiene routine. As soon as infants have their first tooth come in, parents can begin keeping it clean. Once they are old enough to brush, parents can create a routine and help them see it through.

*See your dentist
every 4 months for
cleanings and
check-ups during
orthodontic
treatment in order
to help avoid tooth
decay and gum
disease.*





Be sure to brush your teeth at least twice per day, for two minutes each time. While you are at it, brush your tongue as well. You also need to floss at least once per day. This is one that even adults like to cut corners on, but the benefits are well worth the effort.

Visit to your dentist's office every 4-6 months for a check up and cleaning. This will help keep the plaque removed from your mouth, the teeth clean and polished, and will help the dentist discover any issues that may arise.

Get an orthodontic as recommended by your dentist or if you feel you have issues that may warrant one! Issues such as bite misalignment, braces, and teeth straightening are best handled, in most cases sooner rather than later.

Always use a mouth guard when playing sports. This simple little device, which can be picked up at a sporting good's store, can save you a great deal of pain and money later!

Replace your toothbrush regularly, which is every two to three months or as the bristles become frayed.

Avoid forgetting to floss each day. Leave the floss sitting out on the bathroom counter, or put a little sticky note on the mirror. Make a point to do it each day for a month, by which time it should become a habit.

Make sure that even though you are brushing twice a day that you are brushing long enough. Aim for two minutes per session. If you opt for an electric toothbrush, they often let you know when it has been two minutes.

Speak to your doctor about any prescriptions you may be taking that have side effects that harm the teeth. If there are some, maybe you can get them swapped out for something else or ask for suggestions to protect your teeth.

Avoid smoking or using chewing tobacco, both of which can lead to many oral health problems.

Keep drinks in check! Sugar drinks should be avoided or kept to a minimum, as well as highly acidic drinks (e.g., citrus sodas and sports drinks, etc.), which can eat away at and erode the tooth enamel.

Forget using your teeth to open things or chew on items such as pens. Both can be damaging.

Avoid sharing things like straws, utensils, lip balm, etc. The bacteria and saliva can transmit things that lead to an unhealthy mouth.

Staying Healthy

Having a healthy mouth is important for life, a healthy overall body, and achieving optimal wellness. It is also essential for feeling comfortable and confident, as well as living pain-free. Keep the above items in your mind, make them a habit, and you will be well on your way to a healthy mouth!

Dr. Tarpenning is a dentist at Hebert Dental in Eau Claire, Wisconsin and has authored a book entitled "Get Your Smile On! Your Guide To Extraordinary Dental Care" in 2013.

For more information you can reach him at 715-835-0606 or by e-mail at info@hebertdental.com

