



Quick Tips for Having a Healthy Mouth

You CAN have a healthy mouth.

1. Brush your teeth two times a day.

Regular tooth brushing helps keep your mouth clean. A clean mouth means no plaque (plak) and germs on your teeth. Here are some things to remember before you brush your teeth:

- You need a soft toothbrush.
- Toothpaste with fluoride helps make your teeth stronger.
- Get a new toothbrush every three months.
- Brush in the morning after breakfast and in the evening before you go to bed.



When brushing your teeth:

- ☺ Wash your hands with soap and water.
- ☺ Wet the toothbrush.
- ☺ Use a pea-size amount of toothpaste on your toothbrush.
- ☺ Start with the toothbrush at the gum line.
- ☺ Move the toothbrush in circles on each tooth.
- ☺ Brush the outside, inside, and top of each tooth.
- ☺ Brush your teeth for 2 minutes.
- ☺ After you finish, rinse your mouth with water.

Even if you have a few or no teeth, brush your gums to keep your mouth healthy.

2. Floss your teeth one time a day.

Flossing helps keep your mouth clean and free of plaque. Your toothbrush cannot reach plaque that collects between your teeth or along your gum line. You need to floss to get the plaque between your teeth.

You need dental floss to clean your teeth. Floss at least one time a day in the evening before brushing your teeth and going to bed.



When flossing your teeth:

- ☺ Start with an arm length of floss (about 18 inches).
- ☺ Wrap the ends of the floss around the middle finger of each hand.
- ☺ Hold the floss tight with your thumbs.



- ☺ Gently slide the floss between your teeth until the floss reaches the gum line.
- ☺ Move the floss up-and-down and back and forth.
- ☺ If the floss gets shredded, use a new piece.
- ☺ To get the floss out, pull it up and away from the teeth.

Other things to know about flossing:

- Try different kinds of floss or flossing aids to see what you like best.
- Flossing is not easy. It takes lots of practice.

Remember to wash your hands both before and after cleaning your teeth.



3. See your dentist at least one time a year.

See a dentist at least one time a year. Your dentist will check your gums and teeth. The dentist will ask if you are having pain in your mouth. The dentist might take pictures (x-rays) of your teeth. The dentist will fix your teeth if something is wrong. The dentist may not finish fixing your teeth on the first visit and you may have to go again.

A dental hygienist (hi-gen-ist) will clean your teeth. This will help get rid of plaque and germs that cause cavities. The dental hygienist will show you the best way to brush and floss.

If you feel pain in a tooth, call to see the dentist. If you wait too long, the pain will get worse.

To learn more about a trip to the dentist and about brushing and flossing, watch this ["Why Brush and Floss" video](#).