

BE PROUD OF YOUR MOUTH

PRACTICE A GOOD ORAL HYGIENE ROUTINE

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Prevention is the best option. Practicing a good oral hygiene routine, combined with regular visits to the dentist, is one of the most important things you can do for your teeth and mouth.

Most oral health conditions are largely preventable and can be treated in their early stages. Maintaining good oral health has a positive impact on your general health, well-being and quality of life.

FACT

Oral diseases, such as tooth decay (dental caries) and gum disease, can impact every aspect of life, from relationships and self-confidence through to school, work, and the ability to interact with others. Yet they are preventable.

WHAT IS A GOOD ORAL HYGIENE ROUTINE

Here's how you can help keep your mouth healthy throughout life:

- **Brush for two minutes, twice a day.** Toothbrushing helps remove food and plaque, which if not managed can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.
- **Brush every surface.** Use a manual or electric toothbrush to brush the inside surfaces, outside surfaces and chewing surfaces of your teeth.
- **Use a fluoride toothpaste.** Fluoride plays a key role in the fight against tooth decay.
- **Do not rinse with water straight after brushing.** This can wash the protective fluoride away. Spit out any excess toothpaste instead.
- **Replace your toothbrush every three months.** Brushing with an old, frayed toothbrush will not clean your teeth and mouth properly.
- **Floss at least once a day.** Floss and interdental cleaners help reach those difficult areas between your teeth. Regular cleaning helps to dislodge food and may reduce gum disease and bad breath by removing plaque that forms along the gum line.
- **Protect your mouth while you're on the go.** When brushing is not possible, rinse with a fluoride mouthwash or chew sugar-free gum after meals and snacks.

HOW TO MAINTAIN GOOD ORAL HEALTH THROUGH LIFE

During pregnancy: women can experience morning sickness. Gastric reflux (regurgitating food or drink) or vomiting can increase the amount of acid your mouth is exposed to, which can damage tooth enamel and increase the risk of tooth decay. If you vomit, rinse your mouth out with water and either rub toothpaste onto your teeth with your finger, or use a fluoridated mouthwash. You should wait at least 30 minutes before brushing your teeth.

Children: losing primary teeth (milk teeth) is normal. However, it is important to look after them properly to avoid losing them too early because of tooth decay. Share the *Learn good oral health habits from Toothie* fact sheet with your children and empower them to practice healthy behaviours.

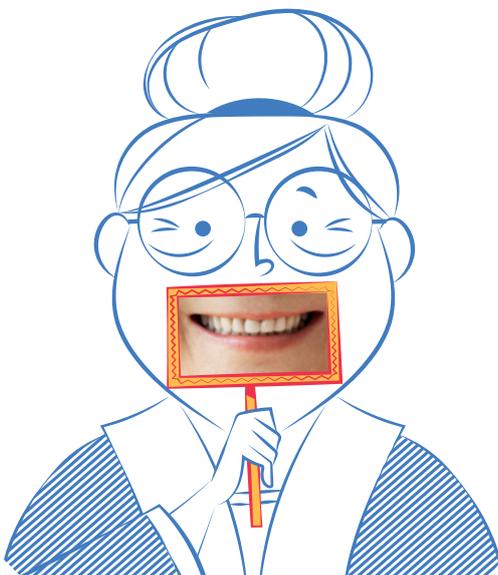
Older adults: a dry mouth can be a problem as you age; it happens when you do not have enough saliva to keep your mouth wet. Saliva helps you carry out a number of functions and also cleanses your mouth, which lessens the effect of acids that can cause tooth decay. Causes of dry mouth include tobacco and alcohol, as well as certain medications and other diseases.

FACT

More than 530 million children suffer from tooth decay in their primary teeth (milk teeth).

To relieve symptoms of a dry mouth, try:

- chewing sugar-free gum or sucking on sugar-free candies to stimulate salivary flow;
- drinking water with meals to help chew and swallow food, and wet your mouth with water regularly throughout the day;
- using alcohol-free mouth rinse;
- avoiding carbonated drinks (like soda), caffeine, tobacco and alcohol;
- using a lip balm to soothe cracked or dry lips.



Look after your oral health for your happiness and well-being