

# Healthy habits your dentist wishes you would follow

Issued by [Intercare](#)

2 Oct 2023

Maintaining good dental hygiene is essential for healthy teeth and a confident smile. We all know the drill - brush twice daily, floss, and limit sugar intake. However, preventing tooth decay involves more than just these basic recommendations. Here are some valuable tips to keep your teeth in optimal condition.



- **Floss, then brush:**

Flossing once a day helps remove food particles and plaque between your teeth and the gumline. It's essential for maintaining healthy gums. It takes only a minute or two to floss your entire mouth, and it should be done before brushing.

- **Brush up on your brushing:**

Brush your teeth at least twice daily with fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride works by replacing lost minerals in teeth, which can occur due to the acidic environment created by bacteria in the mouth. When bacteria in the mouth break down sugars and carbohydrates, they produce acid that can erode the enamel on teeth, leading to cavities and decay. Fluoride helps to counteract this process by strengthening the enamel and making it more resistant to acid erosion. In addition to preventing tooth decay, fluoride can also cause teeth to be stronger overall, which can help to reduce the risk of other dental problems such as chipping or cracking. Make sure to brush for at least two minutes to remove plaque and prevent the growth of acid-producing bacteria. When you do not have time to brush, try to chew sugar-free gum. It will help remove food particles from your teeth by stimulating saliva production, which helps neutralise acids and promote remineralization.

- **Spit, don't rinse:**

Don't rinse your mouth immediately after brushing, as it'll wash away the concentrated fluoride in the remaining toothpaste. Instead, spit out any excess toothpaste. This ensures that the fluoride in the toothpaste has enough time to interact with your tooth enamel and provides maximum protection against tooth decay.

- **Fix your diet:**

Eat a balanced diet low in sugary snacks and beverages. Sugar contributes to tooth decay, so choosing healthy snacks can help protect your teeth. Avoid excessive consumption of sugary beverages like sodas, sports drinks, and fruit juices, as they can erode enamel and lead to cavities. Drinking water helps wash away food particles and maintains saliva production, essential for neutralising acids and preventing cavities.

Certain foods can contribute to stronger teeth by providing essential nutrients. Calcium is crucial for strong teeth and bones. It can be obtained from dairy products like milk, cheese, yogurt, and leafy green vegetables. Enamel-friendly vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin D, phosphorus, and potassium, also play a role in maintaining strong teeth. These can be found in fatty fish, eggs, nuts, and bananas. Limit acidic foods like citrus fruits as they can weaken enamel over time. Consume them in moderation and rinse your mouth afterward.

- **Be proactive with probiotics:**

Research suggests that certain probiotics can promote remineralisation of teeth. Probiotics such as Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium may help maintain a healthy balance of bacteria in the mouth and support remineralisation. Probiotics can also help with better breath, decrease gingivitis symptoms, reduce inflammation, and reduce the risk of developing oral cancer. Talk to your dentist about probiotic options that may benefit your oral health.

- **Keep it white and bright:**

To maintain white teeth, it's essential to avoid certain habits and substances that can cause staining. Limit your intake of staining foods and drinks such as coffee, tea, red wine, and dark berries. Also, avoid smoking and tobacco products, which can cause severe tooth discoloration. Quitting is beneficial for your overall oral and general health. While baking soda can help remove surface stains, it's essential to use it sparingly as it can be abrasive and damage the enamel if used excessively. Consult your dentist for professional teeth whitening options to achieve the best results and a brighter smile.

- **The dentist will see you now:**

Schedule regular dental cleanings and annual exams with your dentist. This can help catch any issues, such as cavities or gingivitis, early and ensure your oral health is on track. Dental problems can also be prevented by paying attention to certain symptoms and signs. Differentiating between craze lines (harmless, superficial cracks in the tooth enamel) and cracked teeth (more serious damage that requires treatment) is crucial. If you experience persistent pain or sensitivity or notice substantial cracks, consult your dentist for appropriate care.

You can maintain healthy teeth and promote optimal oral health by following these helpful tips. Remember to brush and floss regularly, schedule annual dental visits, spit rather than rinse, and avoid staining substances. Incorporating probiotics and tooth-strengthening foods into your diet can further support your dental health. Lastly, be vigilant in identifying any potential dental issues and seek professional dental care when necessary. With these practices in place, you'll be on your way to maintaining a healthy smile for years.

#### **Sources**

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