

Oral Health Factoids

Dental Wisdom from Delta Dental of Iowa

DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 120 signs and symptoms of disease can be diagnosed through a routine oral exam.[1]
- For every $1 invested in water fluoridation in the U.S., $38 in dental costs is saved.[2]
- Among adults, more than 164 million work hours are lost each year because of dental problems.[3]

BRUSHING AND FLOSSING BASICS

- **Get Your Mouth in Order.** Flossing first — before you brush — loosens lodged particles, allowing fluoride in toothpaste to reach crevices between the teeth and gums.
- **Dental Care By the Numbers.** For floss — 18 inches is ideal. Toothpaste — a pea-sized dollop will do just fine. As for brushing time — a full two to three minutes, twice daily.
- **Toothbrushes are Like Oil Changes.** Get a new one every three months or sooner if brush bristles are worn.

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY SMILE

Beyond just brushing and flossing, you can help protect your overall oral health a number of ways.

- **Use Fluoride.** Drink fluoridated water and use fluoride toothpaste to protect against dental decay.
- **Avoid Tobacco.** In addition to the general health risks, smokers have seven times the risk of developing gum disease compared to non-smokers.
- **Limit Alcohol Intake.** Heavy use of alcohol poses a risk factor for oral and throat cancers.
- **Eat Wisely.** Avoiding sugars and starches when snacking applies to adults and children. Limit the number of snacks eaten throughout the day.
- **Visit the Dentist Regularly.** Check-ups can detect early signs of oral health problems and can lead to treatments that will prevent further damage and in some cases reverse the problem.
- **Watch Your Sugar.** When choosing a beverage, limit the amount of sugar by diluting sports drinks and juices with water. Also look for sugarfree gum with xylitol.

[1] Steven L. Bricker, Robert P. Langlais and Craig S. Miller, Oral Diagnosis, Oral Medicine and Treatment Planning, 1994. [2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016.
[3] American Dental Education Association, 2001.

For more oral health tips, visit deltadentalia.com.

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