

# Health Tips & News

## Keeping a Healthy Smile

One of the first things people see is your smile... but keeping your teeth and gums healthy can keep you smiling for reasons you may not have thought of. Find out how oral health affects your health and how to best care for your teeth and gums.

### Healthy mouths, healthier bodies - is there a link?

Do your body a favour. Go to the dentist. Research shows there may be a link between oral disease and other health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke, as well as premature and low-birth-weight babies. Although scientists are only just beginning to understand this link, dentists are encouraging people to make oral health care a regular part of a healthy lifestyle.

Good health requires good nutrition, but if you don't have strong teeth and healthy gums, your ability to eat properly is diminished. Your choice of foods becomes restricted, and you may have difficulties getting all the nutrients you need.

And it only makes sense that chronic infections in the mouth, as are common with people with gingivitis or gum disease, puts strain on the body's immune system.

## Prevention of gum and tooth problems

For your mouth as for your car, it makes good sense to do some maintenance on a regular basis rather than let a problem grow out of hand from neglect. Follow the Canadian Dental Association's Five-Point Prevention Plan to keep youth teeth and gums healthy.

## Five-Point Prevention Plan

- 1. Brush your teeth carefully at least once every 24 hours.**  
It takes about 2.5 to 3 minutes to do the job right.
- 2. Floss your teeth daily.**  
Flossing cleans those areas your toothbrush simply can't reach between the teeth and under the gumline.
- 3. Eat, drink, but be wary.**  
Eat a well-balanced diet! Avoid sweet foods and drinks especially between meals. And please don't smoke. Smoking can promote serious dental problems like gum disease and oral cancer.
- 4. Check your gums.**  
Check regularly for these signs of gum disease, the leading cause of adult tooth loss: red, puffy or tender gums; gums that bleed even slightly when you brush or floss; persistent bad breath. See your dentist if any occur.
- 5. Don't wait until it hurts.**  
See your dentist for preventive checkups and professional cleanings. Regular visits are the best way to prevent trouble and unnecessary expense.

## Quote of the Month

Every tooth in a man's head is more valuable than a diamond.

~Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 1605

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