



HealthyPeople·Dental

OCTOBER · NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE MONTH

Dental hygiene focuses on four routines that can help people maintain healthy smiles: **brush, floss, rinse, and chew.** The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends brushing your teeth twice a day, for two minutes, with a soft-bristled brush. The size and shape of the brush should fit the mouth allowing you to reach all areas easily.

The proper brushing technique is to:

- Place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gums.
- Gently move the brush back and forth in short (tooth-wide) strokes.
- Brush the outer surfaces, the inner surfaces, and the chewing surfaces of the teeth.
- To clean the inside surfaces of the front teeth, tilt the brush vertically and make several up-and-down strokes.
- Brush your tongue to remove bacteria and keep your breath fresh.

Cleaning between your teeth is an essential part of taking care of your teeth and gums. The ADA recommends cleaning between your teeth once a day to remove plaque that is not removed by brushing. Plaque can eventually harden into calculus or tartar. Because teeth alone account for less than half of the mouth, rinsing can help eliminate biofilm and bacteria that brushing and flossing cannot. Rinsing often, along with brushing and flossing, may help reduce the chance of dental decay and infection. However, avoid rinses that have alcohol in them.

Lastly, clinical studies have shown that chewing sugarless gum for 20 minutes following meals can help prevent tooth decay. The chewing of sugarless gum increases the flow of saliva, which washes away food and other debris, neutralizes acids produced by bacteria in the mouth, and provides disease-fighting substances throughout the mouth.



AND WHAT ABOUT ALL THAT HALLOWEEN

Is thinking about all that Halloween candy and what it does to your child's teeth giving you the chills?

Don't despair — you can be mindful of your child's health and still let them enjoy the special occasion, according to the American Dental Association (ADA).

The decay process in teeth works like this: The majority — about 90 percent — of all foods contain sugars or starches that enable bacteria in dental plaque to produce acids. This attack by bacterial acid, lasting 20 minutes or more, can lead to a loss of tooth mineral and, eventually, to

cavities. A child who licks a piece of hard candy every few minutes or sips a sugary drink is more susceptible to tooth decay because long-lasting snacks create an acid attack on teeth the entire time they are in the mouth. Thus, one approach would be to allow your ghosts and goblins to indulge in Halloween candy at mealtime instead of as a snack.

Practice good oral hygiene by making sure your child brushes and flosses every day, uses fluoride toothpaste, and visits the dentist regularly.

Source: www.ada.org

