

oral health

keep smiling

We've got the tips you
need for a healthy smile



HERE'S TO A HEALTHY SMILE

You know it's important to take good care of your mouth, teeth, and gums. But with jam-packed schedules and so many responsibilities to juggle, sometimes good dental habits can take a backseat.

It's time to make oral health a priority. That's why Rite Aid is proud to offer the information and practical tips in this guide. You'll learn how oral health and overall health are connected and how you can practice good dental habits to preserve your smile.

At Rite Aid, we have the products you need to put these good dental habits into practice. And Rite Aid pharmacists are always ready to answer your questions about oral health.



6 KEY DENTAL TERMS TO KNOW

PLAQUE: a microscopic film of food, saliva, and bacteria that builds up on teeth and gums and, if left unchecked, can destroy tooth enamel and cause tooth decay

TARTAR: plaque that has hardened and can't be removed with brushing

CAVITIES: holes that damage the structure of teeth

PERIODONTAL (GUM) DISEASE: chronic inflammation and infection of the gums and surrounding tissue

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GINGIVITIS: the beginning stage of periodontal (gum) disease, marked by tender, swollen gums that bleed easily

PERIODONTITIS: untreated gingivitis that damages the ligaments and bone that support the teeth, often causing tooth loss

HEALTHY MOUTH, HEALTHY BODY

Here's a good reason to pay better attention to your mouth: Untreated gum disease can lead to a host of problems that affect your overall health.

Take it to heart

Gum disease may be linked to heart and blood vessel problems. Experts believe gum disease causes inflammation, which can contribute to clogged arteries and may raise the risk for heart disease and stroke.

A vicious cycle

Diabetes increases the risk for gum disease, and gum disease may make it harder to manage blood sugar. This can worsen tooth and gum problems.

Big risk for moms-to-be

Gum problems in pregnancy may cause a baby to be too small or born early.

Protect your mouth and body

Good dental habits, along with good glucose control if you have diabetes, may help you avoid these problems. See your dentist immediately if you notice signs of gum disease, including tender or bleeding gums, loose teeth, and bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth.

Talk with your Rite Aid pharmacist about ways to improve your overall health and keep your mouth healthy, too.

4 WAYS TO WIN BACK YOUR TEETH AND GUMS

Put a halt to tooth decay and gum disease with these steps:

1

Brush at least twice a day, and floss at least once a day.



TACKLING TOOTH DECAY

Tooth decay is a common condition — second only to the common cold — but it's also highly preventable. Good habits such as brushing, flossing, and rinsing with mouthwash can help protect your teeth.

Tooth decay troublemakers

Tooth decay occurs when foods with carbohydrates (sugars and starches) are left on the teeth. Culprits include:

- Soda
- Raisins
- Pastries
- Cereals
- Candy
- Cookies
- Fruit juices
- Bread

Bacteria that normally live in the mouth change these foods, producing acids. The combination of bacteria, food, acid, and saliva form plaque that sticks to the teeth. As a result, over time, tooth enamel is destroyed, causing cavities.

Who's at risk?

We all host bacteria in our mouths that make us potential targets for tooth decay. But some people are more at risk, such as children, older adults, and people with diets high in sweets, carbohydrates, and sugars.

Ask your dentist about the supplemental use of fluoride and/or dental sealants to protect teeth against plaque.

QUICK TIP

Clinical studies have shown that chewing sugarless gum for 20 minutes after meals can help prevent tooth decay.

Source: American Dental Association

2

Avoid tobacco in any form.

3

Eat a healthy diet and limit foods high in sugar.

4

Visit your dentist twice a year for regular checkups and cleanings.



BRUSH UP ON YOUR BRUSHING TECHNIQUE

Brushing your teeth regularly and properly is the single best way to remove harmful plaque.

What's your brushing style?

If you use a back-and-forth motion, you could be damaging your gums. Instead, dentists recommend this method:

- Place the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle.
- Gently brush a small group of teeth at a time in a circular motion until you've reached every tooth. Brush for at least two minutes.
- Be sure to reach all surfaces of your teeth, as well as in between each tooth.
- Gently brush your tongue to remove bacteria and freshen breath.
- Repeat these steps at least twice daily, especially after meals and snacks.

Time for a new toothbrush?

Replace your toothbrush every three to four months. Look for a small toothbrush head with soft, nylon bristles that are rounded at the ends.

Toothpaste: Find your main squeeze

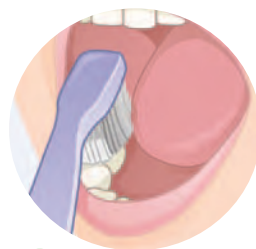
Fluoride is the most crucial ingredient to look for when deciding on a toothpaste. It helps fight plaque and cavities, and cleans and polishes tooth enamel.



 **HOLD BRUSH AT 45° ANGLE**



 **BRUSH IN A CIRCULAR MOTION**



 **BRUSH FOR AT LEAST 2 MINUTES**

Manual, electric, or sonic? When it comes to toothbrush types, there's a lot to consider. Ask your Rite Aid pharmacist which type is right for you.

DON'T FORGO FLOSSING

Are your teeth only 70 percent clean? If you're not flossing, you could be missing 30 percent of the surfaces of your teeth! Floss reaches where toothbrush bristles can't. Think of toothbrushes and floss as vacuum cleaner attachments — you need special ones to reach and clean different areas.

Flossing in 4 steps

- Break off about 18 inches of floss and wind most of it around your middle finger. Wind the rest around your other middle finger.
- Hold the floss tightly between your thumbs and index fingers and gently guide it between your teeth.
- At the gum line, curve the floss into a C-shape tightly against one tooth. Gently floss up and down away from the gum.
- Repeat for each tooth — and don't forget the back side of your last tooth.

Flossing tools

If you have trouble flossing, try:

- **Different dental floss:** Wax-coated floss may slide easier between teeth.
- **Floss picks:** Shaped like miniature slingshots, these disposable devices have handles that help get to hard-to-reach areas like back teeth. Picks in bright colors and fun shapes are a great way to get kids flossing.

CAN YOU RINSE AWAY DENTAL PROBLEMS?

- Anticavity rinses with fluoride fight up to 50 percent more of cavity-causing bacteria.
- Most mouth rinses help curb bad breath and freshen your mouth for up to three hours.
- Some prescription-only rinses protect against dry mouth, gum disease, tooth decay, and other problems.



2 DENTAL PROBLEMS YOU SHOULDN'T IGNORE

Dry mouth

Dry mouth prevents saliva from washing away excess food and bacteria, which can lead to cavities, tooth decay, and infections. Dry mouth may be a side effect of certain medications, conditions, or radiation therapy.

To defend against dry mouth:

- Sip water or sugarless drinks frequently.
- Choose moist foods, such as fruits, soups, casseroles, and vegetables in sauces.
- Between meals, suck on ice chips, popsicles, frozen grapes, or sugarless candy and gum.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, carbonated drinks, and alcohol-containing mouthwash.
- Ask your dentist or Rite Aid pharmacist about saliva substitutes.

Dry mouth or bad breath sometimes signals a more serious problem. If you're concerned, talk with your dentist and Rite Aid pharmacist. For a list of medications that may cause or aggravate dry mouth, visit www.riteaid.com/oralcare.

Bad breath

When bacteria from food, saliva, and other sources collects in the mouth, the result is a foul-smelling sulfur compound. Other bad-breath culprits include:

- Dry mouth
- Smelly foods such as garlic, onion, curry, and coffee
- Certain medications
- Gum disease, unclean dentures, and mouth sores
- Smoking and drinking alcohol

Beat bad breath by brushing the back of your tongue, rinsing and gargling with mouthwash, drinking liquids, and keeping dentures and braces clean.



FOOD FRIENDS AND FOES FOR YOUR TEETH

If you are what you eat, that's particularly true for your teeth and gums. Munching on starchy foods and drinking sugary beverages not only feeds you, it also feeds the plaque that can cause havoc in your mouth. While some foods invite tooth decay, others help combat plaque buildup. Here are some foods to seek out — and some to avoid.

THE BAD GUYS

Sugary candies and sweets that stick in your teeth, such as lollipops and caramels

Starchy foods that get stuck in your teeth, such as bread or potato chip bits

Foods with added sugar, such as cookies and pastries

Carbonated soft drinks

Sports drinks, energy drinks, and highly sugared teas and lemonades

BETTER CHOICES

Sugarless gum and candy



Fiber-rich fruits and veggies like apples, bananas, pears, broccoli, artichokes, and string beans



Cheese, plain yogurt, and other dairy products

Fluoridated water and low-fat or nonfat milk



Green and black tea



WHAT TO DO IN A DENTAL EMERGENCY

From a toothache to a broken jaw, you can take steps to lessen the damage in a dental emergency. Here's how:

Knocked out baby tooth: Apply pressure to the area if there is bleeding. Contact your child's dentist as soon as possible.

Knocked out permanent tooth: If possible, find the tooth and, if dirty, gently rinse it in water. Place it back into the socket and hold. If this can't be done, place the tooth in a clean container with milk, saliva, or water. See a dentist immediately.

Chipped tooth: Rinse your mouth with warm water and put cold compresses on the area to help with swelling. If you can locate the piece of tooth, bring it to the dentist as soon as possible.

Toothache: Rinse your mouth with warm water and apply a cool compress to your face in the area of the toothache. Make an appointment with your dentist as soon as possible.

Object caught between teeth: Gently remove the object with dental floss. Never use a sharp or pointed instrument. See your dentist if you can't dislodge it.

Injured lip or tongue: Gently cleanse the area with a clean cloth. Apply a cold compress to lessen swelling. If it's bleeding and won't stop, go to the emergency room immediately.

a cold compress and



HAVING A COLD COMPRESS
ON HAND CAN
HELP KEEP
SWELLING DOWN
IN A DENTAL
EMERGENCY

BRIGHTEN YOUR CHILD'S SMILE

Here's how to protect kids' teeth at any age:

- Before teeth come in, wipe gums with a clean, damp cloth.
 - As teeth come in, brush them with a small, soft-bristled toothbrush after meals and before bed. Introduce a pea-sized dab of fluoridated toothpaste after age 2, when your child can spit well and won't mistakenly swallow.
 - Schedule a visit with the dentist six months after the first tooth arrives. Like adults, children should see the dentist every six months.
 - Prevent baby-bottle tooth decay: Don't give children a bottle of milk, juice, or sweetened liquid at bedtime or when put down to nap.
 - Start flossing once a day as soon as two teeth touch.
 - Make brushing and flossing fun by doing it together as a team. Use colorful toothbrushes, tasty toothpastes in fun flavors, and floss picks in bright colors and fun shapes. Sing a song or set a timer for two minutes so kids keep brushing.
- Most kids can begin doing it on their own around age 7.
- Avoid foods and treats that increase tooth decay: hard or sticky candies and sweetened drinks and juice. Offer fruit rather than juice.

Remember that good dental care is important at any age. Lead by example by practicing good dental habits yourself.

FUN FACT

Kids have 20 teeth, which they will start to lose around age 5, 6, or 7. New teeth will replace the baby teeth, ultimately resulting in 32 permanent teeth.



Here's something to smile about

Practicing smart dental habits not only improves your smile — it also protects your overall health. Use this guide to learn what you can do now to ensure a happy and healthy smile in the future. Visit **www.riteaid.com/oralcare** for more expert advice.

