



Wellness Matters



SUMMIT ESC's WELLNESS PROGRAM

Energize, Socialize, Come Alive!

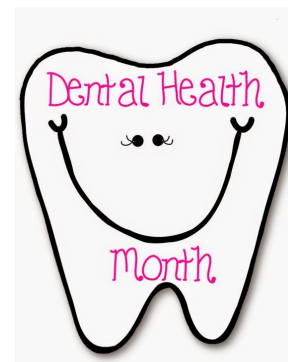
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April Focus- Dental Health

Dental and oral health is an essential part of your overall health and well-being. Poor oral hygiene can lead to dental cavities and gum disease, and has also been linked to heart disease, cancer, and diabetes. Maintaining healthy teeth and gums is a lifelong commitment. The earlier you learn proper oral hygiene habits — such as brushing, flossing, and limiting your sugar intake — the easier it'll be to avoid costly dental procedures and long-term health issues.



[Click Here for 11 Ways to Keep Teeth Healthy](#)

Symptoms of Dental and Oral problems

You shouldn't wait until you have symptoms to visit your dentist. Going to the dentist twice a year will usually allow them to catch a problem before you even notice any symptoms.

If you experience any of the following warning signs of dental health issues, you should make an appointment to see your dentist as soon as possible:

- ulcers, sores, or tender areas in the mouth that won't heal after a week or two
- bleeding or swollen gums after brushing or flossing
- chronic bad breath
- sudden sensitivity to hot and cold temperatures or beverages
- pain or toothache
- loose teeth
- receding gums
- pain with chewing or biting
- swelling of the face and cheek
- clicking of the jaw
- cracked or broken teeth
- frequent dry mouth

If any of these symptoms are accompanied by a high fever and facial or neck swelling, you should seek emergency medical treatment. Learn more about the warning signs of oral health issues.

Adapted from <https://www.healthline.com/health/dental-and-oral-health#treatment>



Types of Dental and Oral Diseases

We use our teeth and mouths for a lot, so it's not surprising how many things can go wrong over time, especially if you don't take proper care of your teeth. Most dental and oral problems can be prevented with proper oral hygiene. You'll likely experience at least one dental problem during your lifetime.

Cavities

Cavities are also called caries or tooth decay. These are areas of the tooth that have been permanently damaged and may even have holes in them. Cavities are fairly common. They occur when bacteria, food, and acid coat your teeth and form a plaque. The acid on your teeth starts to eat away at the enamel and then the underlying dentin, or connective tissue. Over time, this can lead to permanent damage.

Gum disease (gingivitis)

Gum disease, also called gingivitis, is inflammation of the gums. It's usually the result of plaque building up on your teeth due to poor

brushing and flossing habits. Gingivitis can make your gums swell and bleed when you brush or floss. Untreated gingivitis can lead to periodontitis, a more serious infection.

Periodontitis

As periodontitis progresses, the infection can spread to your jaw and bones. It can also cause an inflammatory response throughout the body.

Cracked or broken teeth

A tooth can crack or break from an injury to the mouth, chewing hard foods, or grinding the teeth at night. A cracked tooth can be very painful. You should visit your dentist right away if you've cracked or broken a tooth.

Sensitive teeth

If your teeth are sensitive, you might feel pain or discomfort after having cold or hot foods or beverages.

Tooth sensitivity is also referred to as "dentin hypersensitivity." It sometimes occurs temporarily after having a root canal or a filling. It can also be the result of:

- gum disease
- receding gums
- a cracked tooth
- worn-down fillings or crowns

Some people naturally have sensitive teeth because they have thinner enamel. Most of the time, naturally sensitive teeth can be treated with a change in your daily oral hygiene regimen. There are specific brands of toothpaste and mouthwash for people with sensitive teeth.

Shop for toothpaste and mouthwash made for people with sensitive teeth.

Oral cancer

Oral cancers include cancer of the:

- gums
- tongue
- lips
- cheek
- floor of the mouth
- hard and soft palate

A dentist is usually the first person to recognize oral cancer. Tobacco use, such as smoking and chewing tobacco, is the biggest risk factor for oral cancer. According to the Oral Cancer Foundation (OCF), nearly 50,000 Americans will be diagnosed with oral cancer this year. In general, the earlier that oral cancer is diagnosed, the better the outlook.

[Click Here to Learn More About the Link Between Oral Health and Overall Health](#)

Prevention and Treatment

Cleanings

A professional cleaning can get rid of any plaque you may have missed while brushing and flossing. It'll also remove tartar. These cleanings are usually performed by a dental hygienist. After all the tartar is removed from your teeth, the hygienist will use a high-powered toothbrush to brush your teeth. This is followed by flossing and rinsing to wash out any debris. A deep cleaning is also known as scaling and root planning. It removes tartar from above and below the gumline that can't be reached during a routine cleaning.

Fluoride treatments

Following a dental cleaning, your dentist may apply a fluoride treatment to help fight off cavities. Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral. It can help strengthen the enamel of your tooth and make them more resilient to bacteria and acid.

Antibiotics

If you show signs of a gum infection or you have a tooth abscess that has spread to other teeth or your jaw, your dentist may prescribe antibiotics to help get rid of the infection. The antibiotic may be in the form of a mouth rinse, gel, oral tablet, or capsule. Topical antibiotic gel may also be applied to the teeth or gums during surgical procedures.

Fillings, crowns, and sealants

A filling is used to repair a cavity, crack, or hole in the tooth. The dentist will first use a drill to remove the damaged area of the tooth and then fill the hole with some material, such as amalgam or composite.

A crown is used if a large portion of your tooth needs to be removed or has broken off due to an injury. There are two types of crowns: an implant crown that fits over an implant, and a regular crown that fits over a natural tooth. Both types of crowns fill in the gap where your natural tooth appeared. Dental sealants are thin, protective coatings that are placed on the back teeth, or molars, to help prevent cavities. Your dentist may recommend a sealant for your children as soon as they get their first molars, at around age six, and again when they get their second set of molars around age 12. Sealants are easy to apply and completely painless.

Root canal

You might need a root canal if tooth decay reaches all the way inside the tooth to the nerve. During a root canal, the nerve is removed and replaced with a filling made of a biocompatible material, usually a combination of a rubber-like material called gutta-percha and adhesive cement.

Probiotics

Probiotics are mostly known for their role in digestive health, but new

research has shown that the healthy bacteria may be beneficial for your teeth and gums. Probiotics have been shown to prevent plaque and treat bad breath. They also help to prevent oral cancers and decrease inflammation from gum disease. While large clinical trials are still needed to prove their effectiveness, results to date have been promising. You can take a probiotic supplement or eat foods high in beneficial bacteria, such as yogurt, kefir, and kimchi. Other popular probiotic foods include sauerkraut, tempeh, and miso.

Changing daily habits

Keeping your mouth healthy is a daily commitment. A dental hygienist can teach you how to properly take care of your teeth and gums on a daily basis. In addition to brushing and flossing, your daily routine can include mouthwash, oral rinses, and possibly other tools, such as a water flosser.

Adapted from <https://www.healthline.com/health/dental-and-oral-health#treatment>

Healthy Recipes

- [Quinoa Porridge with Cinnamon Apples](#)
- [Fresh Fruit Smoothie](#)
- [Banana Nut Muffins](#)
- [Mountain Trail Mix](#)
- [Spinach and Mandarin Orange Salad](#)
- [Guacamole Chicken Lettuce Wraps](#)
- [Southwestern Chicken Salad](#)
- [Eggplant Pizza](#)
- [Black Bean Burgers](#)
- [Cedar Plank Salmon](#)
- [Frozen Fruit Pops](#)
- [Chocolate Chip Cookies](#)

