



JUNE Men's health

Why is dental care important for men?

Statistically, men may neglect their oral health and be less likely than women to seek preventive care for their teeth and gums.

It's important for all men to take good care of their mouths, but dental health experts say some men should make good oral hygiene an even higher priority:

Men who take certain medications. Some prescriptions, such as heart or blood pressure medications or antidepressants, can cause dry mouth, which increases the risk of cavities.

Men who use tobacco. Smoking or chewing tobacco increases your risk for gum disease and oral cancer. Age also is a factor: 95 percent of oral cancers occur in people older than 40.

Men who play sports. Men who participate in sports have a greater potential for trauma to their mouths and teeth. When playing contact sports, it's important to use a mouth guard to protect your teeth. Men who ride bicycles or motorcycles should wear a helmet, too.

Sources: Academy of General Dentistry, American Dental Association

Trivia time:

If you start smoking at 18 and smoke a pack a day, how many teeth will you have lost by your 35th birthday?

Answer: Four or five. Smokers are about twice as likely to lose their teeth as nonsmokers.

By the numbers: Men's oral health

American men could step it up when it comes to caring for their teeth and gums. Research shows that:

- > 20.5 percent of men are likely to brush their teeth after every meal, compared to 28.7 percent of women
- > 49 percent of men are likely to brush their teeth twice a day, compared to 56.8 percent of women
- > 56.4 percent of men are likely to develop gum disease, compared to 38.4 percent of women

Sources: Academy of General Dentistry, American Dental Association, CDC

5 tips for taking care of your teeth

Healthy mouths are happy mouths. Follow these simple steps to improve your oral health:

1. Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste for 2-3 minutes twice a day.
2. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush and position it at a 45-degree angle where your gums and teeth meet.
3. Replace your toothbrush every three months or after you've been sick.
4. Floss every day.
5. Visit your dentist at least once a year for cleanings and exams.

Sources: Academy of General Dentistry, American Dental Association

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