



## > Dental hygiene

January

### Put fun in your resolutions!

This new year, why not make some easy resolutions that feel good? For example:

- > Schedule 15 to 30 minutes, twice a day, for an activity you enjoy.
- > Say thank you more often in your daily life.
- > Keep a gratitude log or journal.
- > Do something new: take dance lessons, join a group or try a healthy recipe.
- > Practice being in the present moment rather than thinking about the future or the past.
- > Give yourself a healthy reward for meeting a goal.
- > Enhance your smile by flossing your teeth every day.
- > Share laughter more often with others.

Source: *Reboot with Joe, Live Well Network* and *American Dental Association*

### Keep your teeth and gums healthy during pregnancy

If you're pregnant, be sure to practice good oral health habits for your teeth and gums. You may notice temporary changes to your teeth or gums, such as swelling or bleeding. These are normal and can be caused by hormone levels or stomach acids if you have morning sickness.

It's important to keep getting routine dental care and let your dentist know you're pregnant. If you need dental work, the second trimester is the best time. To be on the safe side, postpone non-urgent dental work until after the birth of your baby.

Source: *American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Nurse-Midwives and American Pregnancy Association*

### Trivia time:

*What do you call a bear with no teeth?*

*Answer: A gummy bear!*



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### Know which foods can hurt your teeth

You probably know candy and sugary sodas are bad for your teeth. So are these:

- › Sticky and crunchy foods
- › Citrus fruits and drinks
- › Sports drinks if they contain sugar
- › Coffee and tea if you add sugar
- › Alcohol, which dries out your mouth
- › Ice, if you chew it

The best foods for your teeth are those that stimulate saliva production. They include:

- › Fiber-rich fruits and vegetables
- › Dairy products
- › Green and black teas (without sugar)
- › Sugarless gum

Saliva reduces the effects of acids and enzymes on your teeth and can also help replace minerals.

Source: University of Rochester Medical Center and American Dental Association

### Trivia time:

*What is the only muscle in your body that is attached at just one end?*

Answer: The tongue!

### Brush your teeth like a pro

First, use a toothbrush with soft nylon, round-ended bristles that won't scratch your teeth or irritate your gums. Then follow these tips:

- › Place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to your gums.
- › Gently move the brush back and forth in short, circular strokes.
- › Brush the outer, inner and chewing surfaces of your teeth.
- › Tilt the brush vertically and use up-and-down strokes to brush the inside of your front teeth.
- › Brush your tongue from back to front to remove bacteria and keep your breath fresh.

Remember to replace your toothbrush every three to four months, or sooner if the bristles are frayed.

Source: American Dental Association, Mayo Clinic and American Dental Hygienists' Association

### Why flossing matters

Did you know that if you don't floss your teeth, you miss about 40 percent of your tooth surfaces?

Flossing is an important part of taking care of your teeth and gums. The American Dental Association recommends that you floss at least once each day to help remove plaque from between your teeth, where your toothbrush can't reach. Plaque can harden into tartar, which is more difficult to remove.

The most important thing about flossing is simply doing it. It doesn't really matter what time of day you floss, or whether you floss before or after brushing. Just pick a time that's convenient for you.

Source: American Dental Association and National Children's Oral Health Foundation