



Good oral hygiene

October

Keep your gums healthy

Gum disease is caused when plaque (a sticky film of bacteria) in our mouths builds up and is not removed with brushing and flossing. When plaque is not removed, it hardens and becomes tartar, which only a dental professional can remove. If left untreated, the bacteria in plaque can cause the surrounding gums to become irritated and swollen. The good news? Gum disease is preventable with a few easy steps:

- > Brush your teeth twice a day, and don't forget your tongue
- > Floss at least once a day to help remove hidden food particles
- > Swish with mouthwash to help reduce plaque
- > Visit your dentist regularly for cleanings and checkups

If you have any of the symptoms of gum disease – such as red or swollen gums, persistent bad breath, painful chewing or loose teeth – make sure to visit your dentist to assess your symptoms and discuss a treatment plan to eliminate the gum disease for a healthier, pain-free mouth.

Sources: American Academy of Periodontology, ADA, National Institute of Dental Research

Trivia time:

What are the origins of dental floss?

Answer: In 1815, a dentist introduced the idea of using waxed silk thread to clean between teeth. What a great idea, considering what people had been using – horse hair!

Fresh breath facts

Keeping your breath fresh is easier than you think. Just follow these easy steps:

- > Brush your teeth and tongue at least twice a day.
- > Rinse or gargle with water or mouthwash.
- > Floss your teeth at least once a day.
- > Drink plenty of water to prevent dry mouth, a cause of bad breath.
- > Schedule regular dental checkups.
- > Avoid tobacco and alcohol.

If bad breath persists, consult your dentist to identify the cause and help develop a treatment plan.

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Family Doctor

You can help prevent mouth cancer

There are several ways to help reduce your risk of mouth cancer. Stop using tobacco or don't start – smoking or chewing tobacco exposes your mouth to dangerous cancer-causing chemicals. Drink alcohol in moderation or not at all. Other good ways to help prevent mouth cancer are eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, wearing lip balm with sunscreen and seeing your dentist regularly, who can make sure your mouth is healthy and cancer free.

Sources: MD Anderson, Mayo Clinic