



DAY IN DAY OUT

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

Flossing Our Way to Better Health

DENTAL HYGIENE

Your insurance very likely covers a dental check-up every six months - for free! (Well, beyond the bi-monthly payment of course.) You know what isn't free? Cavities. Or anything beyond those check-ups. Sure, they cover a percentage of it but why pay anything extra? Let's make dental health a priority and save those dollars for the fun stuff!

COVERING THE BASICS

We all know the basics of what we're supposed to be doing for good dental hygiene, but that doesn't mean we actually do it. If we want to avoid cavities and gum disease, we just need to spend 5-8 minutes per day taking care of our teeth - that's it!

- » Use a soft-bristled toothbrush that is small enough to reach behind the molars - it can be tight back there! An electric toothbrush can be helpful but is not mandatory, you can still brush well with a "regular" toothbrush.
- » We need fluoride to build up the enamel in our teeth and make them stronger. Make sure you're choosing toothpaste with fluoride and that the water you drink has fluoride in it.
- » Use short back-and-forth motions when brushing and make sure you're getting the inside, outside, and tops of teeth. Aim the bristles where the teeth and gums meet and don't forget to brush your tongue as well. It's a good idea to also use a tongue scraper which removes more bacteria and helps prevent bad breath.



- » Brush for at least 2 minutes. A lot of electric toothbrushes have a timer built in but you can set your own or brush to your favorite song!
- » Rinse your toothbrush well when you're done and let it air dry. Covering the bristles increases the likelihood of bacteria growing.
- » Floss your teeth - once a day - you can do it! Use at least 18 inches of floss or help yourself out and use one of the flossing picks! It is so easy. Make sure you are "hugging" each side of the tooth, so you'll essentially pass the floss through each space twice. Our gums peak upward between each tooth so you want to floss on both sides of the peak!
- » Rinse with mouthwash to hit all the places your toothbrush, flosser, and tongue-scraper didn't reach.
- » Replace your toothbrush/toothbrush head every 3-4 months or more often if the bristles are looking frayed.

WHAT ABOUT OUR BABIES?

Dental hygiene is important for them, too! Before teeth pop up, wipe their gums clean twice a day with a soft, wet washcloth to remove bacteria. Once they get their first tooth, start brushing! Use only water until they are two years old. They can start seeing a dentist by their first birthday!

AND FOR OUR OLDER CHILDREN?

Once they turn two years old, you can start helping them brush with a fluoride toothpaste. As soon as two teeth are touching together, start flossing! Brushing can be tricky for our little kiddos so be prepared to help them for quite some time, making sure they're brushing long enough and hitting each tooth sufficiently. Talk to their dentist about getting dental sealants - a thin coating that "seals" the deeper grooves on the back teeth, helping prevent particles and germs from sticking.

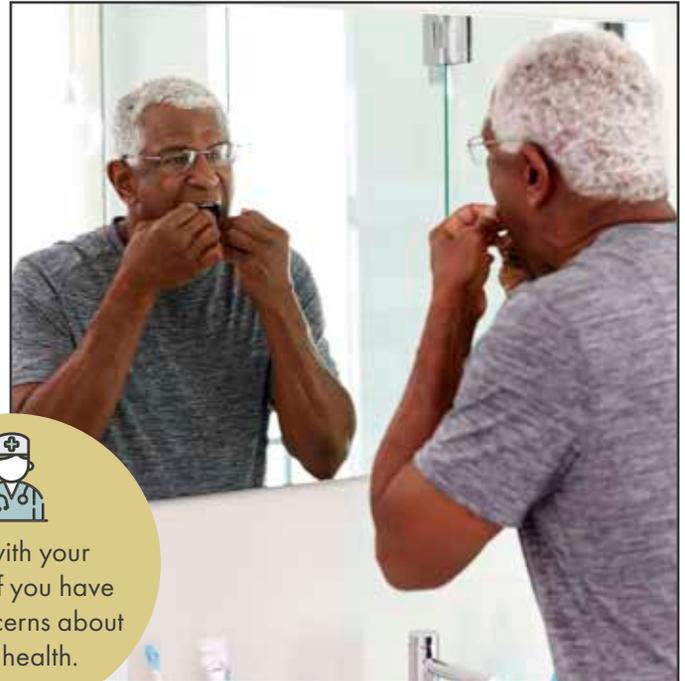
MORE THAN JUST FRESH BREATH

In addition to fresher breath, avoiding cavities, and gum disease; good oral hygiene increases your overall health. Poor oral hygiene has been linked to heart disease, stroke, poorly controlled diabetes, oral cancer, preterm birth, and more.

In addition to seeing your dentist twice a year, also head in if there's anything concerning, such as:

- » Red, tender, swollen, or bleeding gums.
- » New sensitivity to hot or cold.
- » Gums pulling away from teeth.
- » Loss of any permanent teeth.
- » Mouth sores or ulcers that aren't healing.
- » Persistent bad breath.

Make dental health a life-long priority! Not only is it good for you, but it's good for your bank account and you know we all love that!



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

TIPS TO GOOD DENTAL HYGIENE

- » Brush 2-3 minutes at least twice per day with a fluoride toothpaste. This hardens tooth enamel.
- » Floss daily.
- » Limit acidic drinks, like sodas and juice. They dissolve minerals in the tooth enamel.
- » Limit sugary foods, which become acidic when mixed with bacteria in our mouth.
- » Avoid tobacco use.
- » Use your teeth for chewing! Not opening packages.
- » See your dentist for regular check-ups every 6 months.