



# CELEBRATING NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE MONTH

Did you know that October is National Dental Hygiene Month? In honor of the occasion, we invite you to learn more about the importance of practicing good dental hygiene.



Sources:

[1CDC.Gov/Oral-Health/Prevention/Oral-Health-Tips-for-Adults.html](https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/prevention/oral-health-tips-for-adults.html)

[2MayoClinic.org/Healthy-Lifestyle/Adult-Health/In-Depth/Dental/Art-20047475](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/dental/art-20047475)



## AN OVERVIEW OF ORAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Types of oral health problems include cavities, gum disease, tooth loss and oral cancer.<sup>1</sup> Decreased saliva production, receding gums and lack of flossing can increase your risk of oral health problems.

Certain health conditions can also affect your risk for oral health problems, including:<sup>2</sup>

- **Diabetes:** Having diabetes lowers the body's ability to fight infection, putting the gums more at risk of developing gum disease.
- **Cancer:** A number of cancers have been linked to gum disease. These include cancers of the mouth, gastrointestinal tract, lung, breast, prostate gland and uterus.
- **Alzheimer's disease:** As Alzheimer's disease progresses, oral health tends to get worse.

## GOOD ORAL HEALTH SUPPORTS YOUR OVERALL HEALTH

To keep a healthy mouth and teeth<sup>1</sup>:

- **Prevent dry mouth.** Saliva helps protect your teeth. Drinking water and chewing sugarless gum can help if you suffer from dry mouth.
- **Limit tobacco and alcohol use.** Both raise your risk for cancer.
- **Manage diabetes** to lower your risk of oral health issues, including gum disease.
- **Avoid food and drinks with added sugars,** which can contribute to oral and chronic diseases.
- **Practice good oral hygiene:** Brush your teeth twice a day and floss.
- **Wear a mouthguard** when participating in high contact sports/activities.
- **Visit your dentist at least once a year.** During your visit, your dentist will check for cavities and other oral health problems.