

# 11 Ways to Keep Your Teeth Healthy

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## Take care of your teeth



Achieving healthy teeth takes a lifetime of care. Even if you've been told that you have nice teeth, it's crucial to take the right steps every day to take care of them and prevent problems. This involves getting the right oral care products, as well as being mindful of your daily habits.

### 1. Don't go to bed without brushing your teeth

It's no secret that the general recommendation is to brush at least twice a day. Still, many of us continue to neglect brushing our teeth at night. But brushing before bed gets rid of the germs and plaque that accumulate throughout the day.

### 2. Brush properly

The way you brush is equally important — in fact, doing a poor job of brushing your teeth is almost as bad as not brushing at all. Take your time, moving the toothbrush in gentle, circular motions to remove plaque. Unremoved plaque can harden, leading to calculus buildup and gingivitis (early gum disease).

### 3. Don't neglect your tongue

Plaque can also build up on your tongue. Not only can this lead to bad mouth odor, but it can lead to other oral health problems. Gently brush your tongue every time you brush your teeth.

### 4. Use a fluoride toothpaste

When it comes to toothpaste, there are more important elements to look for than whitening power and flavors. No matter which version you choose, make sure it contains fluoride. While fluoride has come under scrutiny by those worried about how it impacts other areas of health, this substance remains a mainstay in oral health. This is because fluoride is a leading defense against tooth decay. It works by fighting germs that can lead to decay, as well as providing a protective barrier for your teeth.

### 5. Treat flossing as important as brushing

Many who brush regularly neglect to floss. Flossing is not just for getting little pieces of food or broccoli that may be getting stuck in between your teeth, it's really a way to stimulate the gums, reduce plaque, and help lower inflammation in the area. Flossing once a day is usually enough to reap these benefits.

## 6. Don't let flossing difficulties stop you

Flossing can be difficult, especially for young children and older adults with arthritis. Rather than give up, look for tools that can help you floss your teeth. Ready-to-use dental flossers from the drugstore can make a difference.

## 7. Consider mouthwash

Advertisements make mouthwash seem necessary for good oral health, but many people skip them because they don't know how they work. It reduces the amount of acid in the mouth, cleans hard-to-brush areas in and around the gums, and re-mineralizes the teeth. Mouthwashes are useful as an adjunct tool to help bring things into balance.

## 8. Drink more water

Water continues to be the best beverage for your overall health — including oral health. It is recommended to drink water after every meal. This can help wash out some of the negative effects of sticky and acidic foods and beverages in between brushes.

## 9. Eat crunchy fruits and vegetables

Ready-to-eat foods are convenient, but perhaps not so much when it comes to your teeth. Eating fresh, crunchy produce not only contains more healthy fiber, but it's also the best choice for your teeth. Try to avoid the overly mushy processed stuff, stop cutting things into tiny pieces, and get those jaws working!

## 10. Limit sugary and acidic foods

Ultimately, sugar converts into acid in the mouth, which can then erode the enamel of your teeth. These acids are what lead to cavities. Acidic fruits, teas, and coffee can also wear down tooth enamel. While you don't necessarily have to avoid such foods altogether, it doesn't hurt to be mindful.

## 11. See your dentist at least twice a year

Your own everyday habits are crucial to your overall oral health. Still, even the most dutiful brushers and flossers need to see a dentist regularly. At minimum, you should see your dentist for cleanings and checkups twice a year. Not only can a dentist remove calculus and look for cavities, but they will also be able to spot potential issues and offer treatment solutions.