

Healthy teeth to last a lifetime

Oral health and aging: What you should know



The older you get, the more good dental habits matter. Following these tips can help you have a healthy mouth for years to come.

Get two dental check-ups next year

Over time, the nerves in your teeth can get smaller, which makes it more difficult to feel cavities and gum disease.¹

That's why your plan covers regular cleanings and X-rays: so your dentist can catch any problems while they're still small. It's also important to tell your dentist which medications you're taking.²

Brush twice a day for two minutes

Following the American Dental Association's guidelines helps reduce cavity-causing plaque and lowers your risk of gum disease.

Most people only brush for about 45 seconds. But by brushing for two full minutes, you can remove up to 26% more plaque.³ Replacing your toothbrush every 3–4 months helps the bristles clean more effectively.

Denture care

If you wear full or partial dentures, make sure to clean them daily, take them out for at least four hours every day and remove them at night.¹

Floss once a day

Gum disease (periodontitis) is common among older populations, and flossing is an important way to reduce your risk. Floss before you brush so you can remove any food, bacteria and plaque and then effectively clear it away.⁴

Drink more water

Dry mouth is a common side effect of medications many older people take, so drinking water can help wash away cavity-causing bacteria. Try tap water, which often has fluoride.

Caring for a loved one who's elderly or disabled?¹

Follow the above tips for daily oral health care and regular visits to the dentist. It also helps to find a dentist who specializes in caring for elderly and disabled communities. Visit [myCigna.com](https://www.mycigna.com) if you need help finding a dentist.

1. "Aging and Dental Health." Mouth Healthy, American Dental Association, www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/a/aging-and-dental-health. 2. "Adults over 60." Mouth Healthy, American Dental Association, www.mouthhealthy.org/en/adults-over-60/concerns. 3. Raypole, Crystal. 5 Toothbrushing FAQs. 1 Apr. 2019, www.healthline.com/health/how-long-should-you-brush-your-teeth-2. 4. Higuera, Valencia. Is It Best to Floss Before or After Brushing Your Teeth? 16 Dec. 2019, www.healthline.com/health/dental-and-oral-health/floss-before-or-after-brushing.

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