Allina Health 🌱

Basic Dental Care

Dental Care for All Ages

Healthy teeth are one sign of good health for people of all ages. Your teeth need to last your whole life, which is why it's important to keep your teeth, gums, mouth and breath healthy.

With infants, clean your baby's mouth with a clean cloth or a soft toothbrush and water. Start brushing your child's teeth as soon as their first tooth comes in.

Tooth decay (cavities) is a common health concern. Poor dental care can cause infections and lead to serious health problems for children and adults.

Prevent Tooth Decay

Tooth decay can be prevented with a good dental care routine. Your regular dental care routine should include:

- brushing your teeth twice a day for 2 minutes each time. This includes children who don't yet have permanent teeth. Tooth decay can begin on the gum surface and damage growing teeth.

- flossing your teeth once a day. The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends that you floss between your teeth every day.

- replacing your toothbrush every 3 to 4 months

- getting regular dental care. The ADA recommends a dental check up and teeth cleaning every 6 months starting at age 3.

- getting dental sealants and fluoride treatments (for school-age children). These treatments can decrease cavities.

Care of Dentures

If you wear dentures, clean your teeth once a day:

- Brush all surfaces including the side that rests on your gums.

- Use a denture cleaner, not toothpaste.

- Soak dentures in a denture-cleaning solution to help remove plaque and stains.

Bad Breath

Bad breath (halitosis) is normal sometimes. Common causes of bad breath are:

- a dry mouth

- a respiratory illness

- eating strong-smelling foods such as garlic, onion or hot peppers

- food bacteria that is stuck or caught in teeth

- mouth, nose or throat infections

- smoking or using chewing tobacco

- some medicines.

Bad breath that lasts longer than a few weeks with good dental care habits may be a sign of a serious health condition.

Talk with your dentist or health care provider if bad breath does not go away after a few weeks.

Find a Dentist

To find a dentist in your area, do a web search for your state government website then search "find a dentist."

Minnesota: mn.gov/boards/dentistry

Wisconsin: dhs.wisconsin.gov

allinahealth.org