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Oral Wellness Newsletter



Take care of your gums – they take care of you

Taking care of your gums is important for more than just good oral health: the health of your gums can impact other medical conditions you may have, such as heart disease and high blood pressure. With gum disease being the most common cause of tooth loss among adults¹, being proactive with your oral health can make all the difference.

A few signs that you might have gum disease, include red or swollen spots; tenderness when brushing; bleeding; or recession from your teeth.

Although gum disease may develop easily, it's also simple to prevent if you stick to a consistent dental hygiene routine. Remember to brush and floss your teeth thoroughly at least two times a day, as well as work with your dentist to come up with a regimen that meets your needs.

[Learn more about gum disease](#) and how to keep your mouth healthy.



Help ease your child's dental-visit anxieties before a back-to-school cleaning

Let's face it, even as adults we sometimes experience a bit of anxiety before a dental appointment. But, a child's fear of dentists can interfere with their oral health in the long-run. Here are a few tips that can help children with apprehension before their back-to-school dental visit.

Start early

Starting as early as your baby's first tooth eruption will assist with becoming familiar with the dentist, the office surroundings and the dental staff — which can set the stage for many pleasant visits in the future. But perhaps one of the best ways to ensure enjoyable dental visits throughout childhood is to keep their teeth healthy and free of decay. Using the [Chomper Chums®](#) app can make learning proper brushing, flossing and rinsing techniques a fun game!

Find the perfect fit

If you don't have an established dentist for your child already, consider a pediatric dentist who specializes in the care of kids' teeth, gums and mouth.

Here are five benefits of seeing pediatric dentists:

1. Have specialized training in and exclusively treat children and youth.
2. Make interactions less scary by using distraction techniques.
3. Understand common childhood habits and oral health issues.
4. Offer a kid-friendly environment and dental tools.
5. Educate on proper dental habits in an engaging way.

Prepare for dental visits

Children can pick up on fear rather easily. If you have anxiety towards the dentist, try to keep those emotions to yourself when you discuss the upcoming visit with your child. Scheduling an appointment in the morning is usually a good time to take your child to the dentist, as they will be rested and more likely to be in a cooperative mood.

[Explore pediatric dentists near you](#) to schedule a cleaning and brighten those smiles for the upcoming school year.



Keys to healthy aging

As you age, so do your teeth and eyes. Your risks for gum disease and worsening eyesight increase, along with chronic disease and cognitive decline, as you grow older. Here are steps you can take to care for your overall health and help curb age-related issues that can keep you from being your best self.

Take care of your physical health with these five key lifestyle choices:

1. **Manage health care.** Just like a car, our bodies need tune-ups. Your dental work, eye prescriptions and hearing will change throughout the years. Regular check-ups to fix the things that naturally age is a good defense against permanent damage to your health.
2. **Make healthy food choices.** The foods we consume directly affect the health of our mouth and body. The more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats and lean proteins you eat, the healthier you will likely be. Stay away from hard candies or nuts, as these can cause damage to your aging teeth.
3. **Limit alcohol intake and quit smoking.** Tobacco hits your mouth before any other part of your body, putting you at risk for loss of taste and smell, mouth sores, cavities, slow healing after dental procedures, gum disease and oral cancer.² Alcohol can also contribute to higher risks of gum disease and oral cancer.³
4. **Get enough sleep.** Prioritizing sleep quality as you age can help improve memory, mood, dementia, depression, insulin resistance, heart disease and obesity.² Here are some [tips](#) for getting a good night's sleep.
5. **Stay physically and mentally active.** Scientific evidence suggests that people who exercise regularly not only live longer, but also may live better — meaning they enjoy more years of life without pain or disability.² Stay motivated with these [five](#) tips!

Taking care of your physical, mental and cognitive health is important for healthy aging.

[View these tips](#) to boost your health as you age, print it out, keep nearby and remember — no matter your age, it's never too late to improve your lifestyle choices.



National Recovery Month: every person, every family, every community

September marks National Recovery Month – a national observance that promotes and supports our strong, proud recovery community, and the dedication of service providers who recognize that recovery is possible for everyone.

Did you know that substance abuse can also impact oral health? Acid erosion, teeth grinding and dry mouth are common side effects of drug use that can cause damage to your oral and overall health. Treatment can help those struggling with substance abuse to readjust to a functioning lifestyle within their families, communities and workplaces.

Know the warning signs of substance abuse and addiction in the workplace:

Drug and alcohol abuse not only affect the employee, but also the employer if not addressed. Some of the most common indicators of drug abuse in a workplace include:

- Moodiness, irritability and indifference for no obvious reason.
- Sweaty hands; reddened nose or eyes; deteriorating teeth and gums; or a loss of interest in personal hygiene.
- Frequent, unscheduled breaks.
- Increased absenteeism and tardiness.
- Asking other coworkers to borrow money or their employer for advances in pay.

[Here are some tips](#) you can learn to help avoid a habit if you are prescribed opioid medication.

Sources:

[1] Periodontal (Gum) Disease; NIH, 2021. Retrieved July 2023.

[2] Diet Choices for Oral Health; United Concordia Dental, 2015. Retrieved August 2023.

[3] Tobacco Use and Oral Health; United Concordia Dental, 2016. Retrieved August 2023.

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