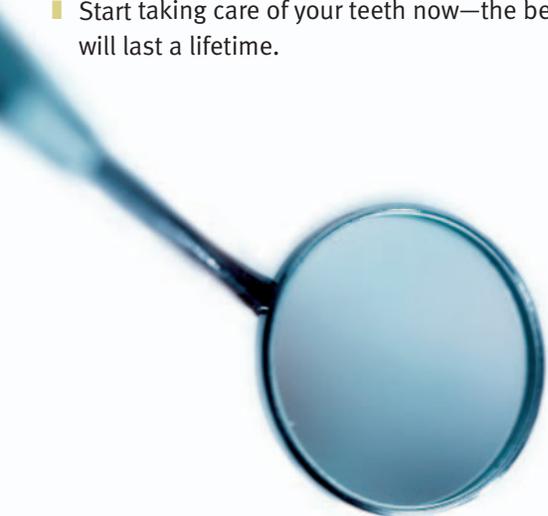


There are Several Things You Can Do to Help Avoid Cavities and Maintain a Healthy Smile:

- Enroll in the Delta Dental program offered by your employer.
- Make an appointment to see your dentist. You should visit your dentist at least once a year for a cleaning and an exam.
- Develop a good oral health routine—including daily brushing and flossing.
- Make sure you are getting enough fluoride—either naturally or through supplements. This is especially important if you do not live in a fluoridated community or if you drink bottled water.
- Watch your diet—avoid frequent snacking or foods high in sugar. Sugar, when combined with the plaque in your mouth, produces the acid that destroys your teeth.
- Start taking care of your teeth now—the benefits will last a lifetime.



Fluoride is Your Friend

Ask any dentist or dental hygienist what one thing you need to keep your teeth healthy and they will tell you—fluoride. But simply buying toothpaste with fluoride may not be enough.

Found naturally in some foods we eat (fish, tea, grape juice, green leafy vegetables), fluoride is a mineral that makes your tooth enamel harder and more resistant to decay.



In more than 10,000 communities across the country, fluoride is added to the public water supplies to give residents the optimal amounts of fluoride they need to ward off cavities. To find out if your town is fluoridated, contact your local water or health department.

If you drink bottled water, you may not be getting the amount of fluoride you need to protect your teeth. Talk to your dentist or hygienist to find out if you need more fluoride. They can prescribe fluoride supplements to help protect your teeth against decay.



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We Care About Your Teeth... Almost as Much as You Do!



Brush Your Way to a Healthier Smile

One of the easiest ways that you can avoid cavities—and your risk of disease—is to brush and floss your teeth everyday. When you brush and floss, you break up the plaque before it has a chance to take hold on your teeth.

Follow these techniques when brushing:

- Hold your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle against your gumline. Brush your teeth using small, circular motions.
- Develop a routine, beginning on the outer surfaces of each upper and lower tooth and then move to the inside surfaces of your teeth.
- To brush the front teeth, tilt the brush vertically and make gentle up and down strokes with the front of your toothbrush.
- Don't forget to brush your tongue and the chewing surfaces of your teeth to remove any food particles that might get trapped in your mouth. Brushing your tongue will eliminate food and bacteria that collect on your tongue and cause *bad breath*.



Some Do's and Don'ts for Brushing Your Teeth...

Do... brush your teeth at least twice each day, preferably once in the morning and once before you go to sleep.

Do... use a soft bristled brush.

Do... use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste that contains fluoride.

Do... take your time. A thorough brushing should take at least two minutes.

Don't... brush your teeth too vigorously or use a hard brush or you may damage your gums and cause them to recede.

Don't... forget to change your toothbrush frequently. You should replace your toothbrush every three months or earlier if the bristles become frayed or worn.

Don't... share your toothbrush or use the same toothbrush after you've been sick. Germs and bacteria get trapped on the bristles of your toothbrush and can be passed from person to person or back to you.

Don't Forget to Floss

Flossing helps you clean between your teeth and removes food and plaque from those hard-to-reach places that your toothbrush misses.

Follow these techniques for flossing your teeth:

- Wrap an 18-inch piece of floss around your middle fingers.
- Hold the floss tightly between your two hands and slide the floss between your teeth, using a gentle back and forth motion.
- Gently guide floss underneath the gumline, curving it around the tooth to remove plaque that collects at the gumline.
- Remember to floss both sides of the tooth, using a clean section of floss after one or two teeth.



You may experience soreness and bleeding initially. Don't worry, this is normal. Your gums will heal with time and the bleeding should stop as the plaque is removed. The end result is a brighter—healthier—smile!

