



Name of Practice: _____

Name of Doctor: _____

Phone: _____

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WHY ORAL CARE MATTERS

Oral health problems are some of the most common conditions among American adults. According to a study conducted by the National Dental Association (NDA) and the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), 39% of Americans said they brush their teeth “less than twice a day” and 21% said they “never” floss. It’s no surprise that another study found that 90% of adults aged 20 to 64 years have tooth decay and that 50% of adults aged 45 to 64 years have gum disease.

Poor oral health isn’t just limited to the mouth, it can also contribute to negative effects on your overall health by increasing your risk of certain health conditions, including cardiovascular diseases like coronary artery disease and endocarditis, Alzheimer’s, pneumonia, complications with pregnancy and birth, and more.

Poor oral health and the risk for these other complications later in life often start in childhood. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), by age eight, 52% of children have had a cavity in their baby teeth, children from low-income families are twice as likely to have cavities as their peers from higher-income families, and on average, children lose 34 million hours of school annually for emergency dental care.

SELF-CARE FOR GOOD ORAL HEALTH

1. **Brush teeth twice a day:** Using an over-the-counter (OTC) fluoride toothpaste and brushing teeth twice a day, for two minutes at a time, reduces the risk of tooth decay and gum disease.
2. **Clean between teeth daily:** Brushing alone doesn’t remove all bacteria or food debris from between teeth, so clean between teeth with dental floss or other flosser products once a day.
3. **Rinse with mouthwash twice a day:** After brushing and flossing, consider using a mouthwash which helps by killing harmful bacteria between teeth and gums.
4. **Eat a healthy diet and limit sugary beverages and snacks:** Eat a balanced diet and cut back on the amount of sugar you eat and drink to reduce the risk of tooth decay.
5. **See a dentist regularly:** Seeing a dentist regularly is just as important as seeing a physician regularly. Visit at least twice a year, or more as recommended by your dentist, and talk about your oral self-care habits between checkups.



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TO BRUSH UP ON YOUR ORAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE!