



October is National Dental Hygiene Month

10 Commandments for maintaining healthy teeth and gums

by admin on September 6, 2008

Healthy teeth and gums reflect a healthy personality. Poor Oral health damages our self-esteem besides the various other harmful effects it has. Here I have outlined the **10 Commandments** which will go a long way in ensuring you have healthy teeth and gums.

1. Brush your teeth twice daily: Brush your teeth twice a day to avoid majority of the dental problems.

Brushing incorrectly may reduce its effectiveness. It's important to know **HOW TO CORRECTLY BRUSH YOUR TEETH.**

2. Use a Dental Floss: Flossing cleans the areas which are harder for a toothbrush to reach. It removes the food debris and plaque accumulated between the teeth. Flossing twice daily is preferable. Do also read the [importance of flossing](#)

3. Use of Mouth Washes: Mouthwashes such as Listerine or Chlorohexidine possess effective antiseptic properties. They kill the **bacterial plaque** known to cause **bad breath, tooth decay and gingivitis**. Use a mouthwash AFTER BRUSHING as per its directions.

4. Eating right: Maintain a **balanced diet** but reduce the consumption of foods containing sugars or starch. Sugary Foods(Candies, gums) and Starchy foods(potato chips, snacks) play an important role in causing tooth decay.

5. Avoid in between eating habits: Snacking between meals makes the teeth prone to tooth decay. The bacterial action is greatest at **acidic Ph**. The Ph is most acidic immediately after meals and gradually reduces and comes to a normal level. Eating in between meals does not allow the acidic level to come down increasing bacterial action **leading to caries**.

6. Avoid Cola and Energy Drinks: Cola drinks contain acids such as phosphoric acid and citric acid which have damaging effect on teeth. Energy drinks contain organic acids in addition to the above which directly damage the tooth calcium. **ENERGY DRINKS AND COMMERCIAL LEMONADE ARE 11 TIMES MORE HARMFUL TO TEETH THAN COLA DRINKS.** If you must drink, don't sip on them for a long time and do rinse your mouth after drinking.

7. Quit Smoking: Smoking not only stains your teeth but also damages your gums by reducing the blood supply. It also causes smokers breath.

8. Chewing Sugar free Gum: Chewing Sugar free gum prevents bad breath and fights tooth decay by washing away the **plaque acid** resulting in healthier teeth.

9. Regular visits to your Dentist: It is essential to visit your dentist once in 3-6 months to diagnose any oral concerns early. Most oral health problems **do not produce any symptoms** till they have progressed to a later stage.

10. Oral Piercings: Oral Piercings such as tongue or lip are a no-no for good oral health. Tongue piercings can lead to allergic reactions, infections, nervous damage to tongue and gum disease.