



**Chapter 1:
Healthy
Bodies**

ORAL HEALTH

Healthy Mouths, Healthy Bodies

Resources/Works Cited:

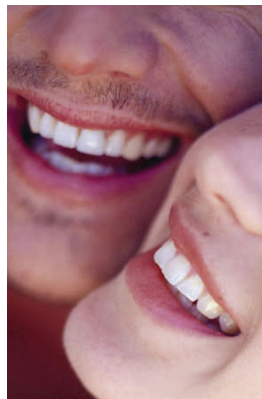
Learn more about your oral health!

The Canadian Dental Association

www.cda-adc.ca/

Health Canada—Healthy Living

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/oral-bucco/index_e.html



Our mouth is one of the most complex and unique parts of our bodies. It is also one of the **most important**. Used to **eat, breathe, and speak**, our mouth represents only one of our body's busy "high-traffic" intersections, and it

contributes to our everyday, overall health in a number of significant ways.

As a doorway to the body, our mouth is the entranceway for the full range of vitamins and nutrients our bodies rely on everyday. We use it to communicate emotions, to laugh and to smile. However, it is only when we maintain **healthy oral habits** that we allow our mouth to perform perhaps its most important task, which is to **screen and forbid harmful bacteria, infections and diseases from entering the body**.

Continue reading this section to learn more about how **safe and proper hygiene, diet and recreation** can impact your oral (and overall) health with respect to the following 3 concerns:

- **Dental Hygiene**
- **Oral Safety**
- **Healthy Eating Habits**

Did You Know?

- Almost 75% of all oral cancers occur among people who **smoke** or use **chewing tobacco**, and in those who drink **alcohol**. Health Canada says that people who both **smoke and drink** increase their risk of getting oral cancer anywhere from 6 to 15 times!
- As much as 50% of the bacteria in the mouth lives on the surface of our tongue. Ew! **Don't forget to brush your tongue as well as your teeth!**
- The use of unsterile instruments and jewelry during oral piercing can **spread Hepatitis, HIV, and other serious diseases**. If you decide to get an oral piercing, make sure you go to a reputable and sterile shop!
- **We should change our toothbrushes every 3 months** or every time after we are sick to prevent bacteria from lingering in our mouths. That's why the dentist gives us a new toothbrush whenever we go in for a cleaning.





Dental Hygiene 101



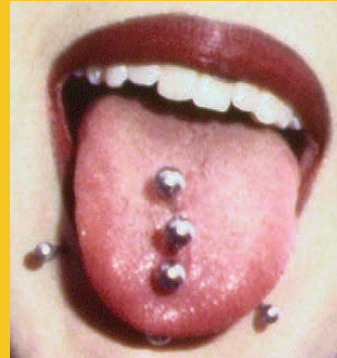
It's not age but **neglect** that causes teeth to break down, weaken and decay. **Prevention** is the most important step you can take to preserve your oral health—and it's never too late to start. You can enjoy a lifetime of beautiful smiles if you follow these **4 simple steps**:

1. **See your dentist regularly.** Regular checkups are the best way to treat and prevent oral conditions. Only your dentist has the training and skills to diagnose dental problems; he or she can spot signs of oral cancers and diseases that often go unnoticed and can transfer to other parts of your body, including **throat, lymphatic system, and brain.**
2. **Practice good oral hygiene.** Using a soft-bristle toothbrush, brush your teeth and tongue at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste to remove food and bacteria that can cause cavities and gum disease. **Floss everyday** to ensure you are cleaning the entire surface of each tooth.
3. **Check your mouth regularly.** Look for warning signs of gum disease/ Gum disease is one of the main reasons why adults lose their teeth. Possible symptoms include red, shiny, puffy, sore or sensitive gums; bleeding when you brush or floss; or bad breath that won't go away.
4. **Don't smoke or chew tobacco.** Tobacco is **extremely dangerous** to your oral and overall health. Tobacco use is a major cause of gum disease, leading to tooth loss and other serious health problems including **oral, lung and throat cancer.**

** Thank You to the Canadian Dental Association for These Great Suggestions**

For more information on the CDA visit www.cda-adc.ca

ORAL BODY PIERCING



There are risks and dangers associated with oral piercing. Side effects (including excess pain, swelling, infection, tooth damage and decay) are hazardous to your oral and overall health. Piercing the tongue is particularly dangerous when proper care is not given to prevent excess swelling, infections and tooth damage. The most common dangers of tongue piercing include:

- Fractures or chipping of teeth that require dental repair.
- Blood-borne infections including HIV or Hepatitis from unsterile instruments or jewelry. Infections are among the most common side effects, due to the large amount of bacteria living in our mouths.
- Piercing of a blood vessel may result in blood loss as well as potential numbness, scarring, and muscular-facial, nerve, or brain damage.

HEALTHY EATING , HEALTHY MOUTH

Maintaining healthy eating habits is crucial to keeping a healthy and beautiful smile. Eating a well-balanced diet, filled with fresh fruits and vegetables will protect the enamel on your teeth and help to prevent and fight off cavities, infection, and gum disease caused by nutrient-deficient diets. Choosing foods from each of the primary food groups ensures that your body receives the nutrients it needs to fight cavities and gum disease. In addition to poor food choices, unhealthy eating habits that result from starving, fasting or extreme dieting pose serious risk to your oral and overall health as they deprive your body of the full range of vitamins and nutrients it needs to stay healthy. **Avoid excess sugar and sticky foods like candy, toffee, pop and chocolate,** that can stay on the teeth long after eating. These are among the main causes of dental problems.

MOUTH GUARDS



Injuries to the mouth are common and occur easily, especially during sports and recreational activities. The best way to protect yourself against oral injuries is to wear a mouth guard. A mouth guard is a flexible and removable piece of equipment that fits the unique shape of your mouth and protects teeth, jaws, lips, tongues, cheeks and gums from injury. It should be worn during sports and higher risk activities like hockey, wrestling, skateboarding, and karate to name a few. If you play sports and wish to prevent oral injuries, see your dentist about having the right mouth guard made for you.



EATING DISORDERS AND ORAL HEALTH

Some common eating disorders, including **Anorexia** and **Bulimia Nervosa** can cause permanent damage to your esophagus, throat, inside of mouth, teeth and gums, thereby compromising your oral and overall health. Some of the most common oral side effects of self-induced vomiting (eg. From Bulimia Nervosa) include:

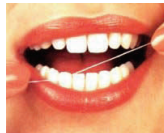


- **Enamel Erosion.** Vomit contains stomach acid, which through repeated contact with your mouth, strips your teeth of its protective enamel.
- **Yellow or Brown Teeth.** Repeat vomiting can discolour your teeth and lead to tooth decay.
- **Persistent bleeding** of gums.

If you think you might have an eating disorder, talk to your doctor, counselor, **Big Brother/Big Sister, parent, or nutritionist**

Health Canada's

THE PROPER WAY TO BRUSH:



- Use a soft toothbrush
- Point the bristles towards the gums
- Gently wiggle the toothbrush back and forth
- Brush all sides of your teeth: the inside (tongue side), the outside (cheek side) and the top (where you chew).
- Brush your tongue
- Removing plaque at least once a day will help prevent cavities and gum disease.

THE PROPER WAY TO FLOSS:

- Pull out 40-50 cm of dental floss from the container. Wrap the ends of the floss around each of your middle fingers, leaving about 2-3 cm of floss between your two fingers.
- Use your thumb and index fingers to hold the floss in place.
- Wrap the floss around each tooth in a "C" shape. Gently slide the floss up and down between your tooth and your gums. This will remove dental plaque.
- Use a new section of floss each time you move to a new space between teeth.

Resources

Available from the Fraser Valley Regional Library

For LITTLES (6-12)

- *Eyes, Ears, Nose and Mouth.* Karen Olsen. Penticton, BC: Theytus Books, 2005.
- *Look What Mouths Can Do.* D.M. Souza. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co., 2006.
- *The Mouth and Nose: Learning How We Taste and Smell.* Jennifer Viegas. New York: Rosen Pub. Group, 2002.
- *My Mouth.* Lloyd G. Douglas. New York: Children's Press, 2004.
- *Going to the Dentist.* Sally Hewitt. California: QEB Pub, 2004.



HEALTHY TEETH ARE HAPPY TEETH!



Remember: Our mouth is a powerful and extremely busy part of our body. It functions like a filter, to control what can and cannot directly enter the body, so it's important that we attend to our mouth regularly and treat it with care. This includes using safe and proper tools to clean it regularly, nourishing it with healthy foods that promote our overall wellness, and protecting it from potential harm and injury. Should you have any questions about oral health and safety, be sure to ask your **Big Brother or Big Sister**, parent, or dentist.

Thank you to the following members of our Panel for

Reviewing this Article:

The BC Dental Association