

Cleaning your Teeth and Gums

The ADA recommends the following for good oral hygiene:

- Brush your teeth twice a day with an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste. Replace your toothbrush every three or four months, or sooner if the bristles are frayed. A worn toothbrush won't do a good job of cleaning your teeth.
- Clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner. Decay-causing bacteria still linger between teeth where toothbrush bristles can't reach. This helps remove plaque and food particles from between the teeth and under the gum line.
- Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks.
- Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams.

Antimicrobial mouth rinses and toothpastes reduce the bacterial count and inhibit bacterial activity in dental plaque, which can cause gingivitis, an early, reversible form of periodontal (gum) disease. ADA-Accepted antimicrobial mouth rinses and toothpastes have substantiated these claims by demonstrating significant reductions in plaque and gingivitis. Fluoride mouth rinses help reduce and prevent tooth decay. Clinical studies have demonstrated that use of a fluoride mouth rinse and fluoride toothpaste can provide extra protection against tooth decay over that provided by fluoride toothpaste alone. Fluoride mouth rinse is not recommended for children age six or younger because they may swallow the rinse. Consumers should always check the manufacturer's label for precautions and age recommendations and talk with their dentist about the use of fluoride mouth rinse.

Talk to your dentist about what types of oral care products will be most effective for you. The ADA Seal on a product is your assurance that it has met ADA criteria for safety and effectiveness. Look for the ADA Seal on fluoride toothpaste, toothbrushes, floss, interdental cleaners, oral irrigators, mouth rinses and other oral hygiene products.

