

To Our Teenage Patients

A bright **smile** and fresh breath – that's what a **healthy** mouth means. It also means you can talk and laugh with **confidence**. Here are facts, ideas and tips on keeping a healthy smile in your teenage years.

What You Need To Know about Your Dental Health

FACT 1: You have not outgrown tooth decay. In fact, dental decay may be more of a problem for you during the teen years than it ever has been before. We see more cavities between our teenagers teeth than we see in our younger children.

FACT 2: Gum disease (gingivitis) is a risk to your dental health. It is also a threat to your appearance. Gum disease causes red and swollen gums, bleeding gums and bad breath.

FACT 3: You will have all your permanent teeth with the possible exception of your wisdom teeth (third molars). During these growing years, your face and jaws will undergo many changes. You can be healthy and attractive through these changes by taking good care of your teeth and visiting your pediatric dentist.

FACT 4: As pediatric dentists, we love seeing our teenage patients. Unfortunately, developing multiple cavities during these teenage years will usually result in referral to a general dentist. General dentists or “adult” dentists, treat multiple cavities on permanent teeth more frequently than we do.

How You Can Keep a Healthy Smile

It is up to you! What you do and do not do is important. Here is a checklist for a healthy smile:

Eat intelligently! Life is going to be hectic now. Choose fresh fruits and vegetables instead of junk foods when you eat on the run.

Hydrate intelligently!! Meaning...drink plenty of water. Water is the most healthy thing you can be drinking. (Flavor it with sugar-free flavorings...Mio, Crystal Light, Sugar-Free Kool-Aid) Sodas, tea, and sports drinks should be limited.

Snack smartly. Be careful of snack foods containing sugar; they can cause damage to the teeth and gums.

Practice good prevention at least twice a day. Brush effectively using a fluoridated toothpaste. **Floss to prevent gum disease and tooth decay on the sides of the teeth. This is the MOST important time to establish proper oral hygiene techniques. DO NOT FORGET TO FLOSS A COUPLE OF TIMES A WEEK!! WE CAN NOT EMPHASIZE THIS ENOUGH!!**

Keep up with your dental checkups. Tooth cleanings, fluoride treatments and sealants are important preventive services for you.

Wear a mouth guard for any sport or activity in which your mouth can be hit.

Wear Sunscreen!!!!

Buckle up in the car. A seat belt and shoulder harness can keep your face from striking the steering wheel, the dashboard or windshield during minor accidents.

Tips For Smart Snacking

1. Be careful of between-meal snacks.
2. Clear the snack from the teeth as soon as possible. Even a simple swish and rinse with water will help.
3. Do not let snacks take the place of nutritionally balanced meals.
4. Drink **WATER**