

Teens 13-18 years

- Teens face oral health issues that are not common in younger kids.
- Appearance and self image are important. Crooked, crowded, and stained teeth can be improved.
- Bad breath is linked to poor oral hygiene. Brush with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, after breakfast and before bed with a soft toothbrush. Floss every night. Tongue brushing or scraping can help too!
- Eating disorders can cause severe dental problems. Get professional help for eating disorders.
- Oral piercing can cause serious, life-threatening infections.
- Avoid tobacco, alcohol, and recreational drugs. Smokers have more gum disease and oral cancer than non-smokers. Alcohol with smoking increases the risk for oral cancer. Meth use can lead to severe dental problems and complete tooth loss.



- ▶ Prevent face and mouth injuries by playing safe, wearing a helmet, using a mouth guard, and wearing a seat belt.
- ▶ Dental sealants prevent tooth decay. Be sure you have sealants on your permanent molars.
- ▶ Drink tap water that is optimally fluoridated. Fluoride is safe, effective, and keeps teeth strong.
- ▶ Sweet and starchy foods (sticky fruit snacks, cookies, crackers, and chips) may cause tooth decay. Eat these foods at meal time. In between meals, snack on fresh fruits, vegetables, cheese, or nuts.
- ▶ Limit juice, soda (including diet), and sport drinks between meals.
- ▶ Visit a dental provider. Dentists and dental hygienists are available in private dental offices, community health clinics, schools, and mobile vans.

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