

JULY 26

## SUMMER ORAL HEALTH: PROTECTING YOUR SMILE DURING THE SUMMER



Summer often brings vacations, outdoor activities, sporting events, and changes in eating habits. While these experiences are enjoyable, they can also increase the risk of dental problems if good oral hygiene is neglected.

Common summertime risks include:

- Increased consumption of sugary beverages
- Frequent snacking between meals
- Dehydration leading to dry mouth
- Higher risk of sports-related dental injuries
- Irregular brushing and flossing while traveling

The good news is that most oral health problems are preventable. Maintaining regular brushing with fluoride toothpaste twice daily, flossing once a day, staying hydrated, and wearing a mouthguard during contact sports can significantly reduce your risk of cavities and dental injuries.

Small daily habits make a lasting difference.

## SPORTS AND DRINKS

Sports drinks are heavily marketed as healthy hydration options, but many contain large amounts of sugar and acids that can damage tooth enamel. Water remains the healthiest choice for most people.

Water

- ✓ Sugar-free
- ✓ Helps rinse food particles
- ✓ Supports saliva production
- ✓ Protects teeth

Sports Drinks

- Often contain added sugars
- Usually acidic
- Can contribute to enamel erosion
- Best reserved for prolonged, intense physical activity

If you choose a sports drink:

Drink it during meals rather than sipping throughout the day.

Rinse your mouth with water afterward.

Wait about 30 minutes before brushing to protect softened enamel.



# FINDING AFFORDABLE DENTAL CARE

Many people delay dental visits because of cost. Fortunately, affordable options are available throughout the United States.

You may qualify for care through:

Community Health Centers

Dental school clinics

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)

Local public health departments

Medicaid (where eligible)

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

Preventive care is generally much less expensive than treating advanced dental disease. Regular checkups and cleanings can help avoid emergency treatment and reduce long-term costs.



# PREVENTION CORNERS

Simple habits have the greatest impact on oral health.



# DAILY PREVENTION CHECKLIST

- ✓ Brush twice daily with fluoride toothpaste.
- ✓ Floss once every day.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water.
- ✓ Limit sugary snacks and beverages.
- ✓ Eat fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and whole grains.
- ✓ Replace your toothbrush every 3–4 months.
- ✓ Wear a mouthguard during contact sports.
- ✓ Schedule regular dental examinations.

Consistent preventive care remains the most effective way to reduce cavities and gum disease throughout life.

# ORAL HEALTH FACTS

**Fact:** Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic diseases worldwide.

**Fact:** Gum disease has been associated with several chronic medical conditions, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

**Fact:** Saliva naturally protects teeth by neutralizing acids and helping repair early enamel damage.

**Fact:** Most cavities and many gum problems can be prevented through daily oral hygiene and routine dental visits.

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Reliable oral health information is available from trusted public health organizations.

Helpful educational resources include:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR)  
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)  
American Dental Association (ADA)  
State and local public health departments  
Using evidence-based information helps individuals make informed decisions about their oral health.



## THIS MONTH'S HEALTHY SMILE CHALLENGE

- BRUSH FOR TWO FULL MINUTES, TWICE DAILY
- FLOSS EVERY EVENING
- DRINK WATER INSTEAD OF SUGARY BEVERAGES
- EAT ONE TOOTH-FRIENDLY SNACK EACH DAY
- SHARE ONE ORAL HEALTH TIP WITH A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER

Small actions practiced consistently can lead to healthier smiles for a lifetime.

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