

OCTOBER 26

**NATIONAL DENTAL
HYGIENE MONTH**

**SMALL DAILY
HABITS, LIFELONG
HEALTHY SMILES**



Welcome to the October 2026 issue of the CareGuard Oral Health Bulletin.

October is recognized as National Dental Hygiene Month, an opportunity to highlight the importance of daily oral hygiene and preventive care.

Healthy smiles are built through consistent daily habits. Brushing, flossing, healthy nutrition, and regular dental visits work together to reduce the risk of cavities, gum disease, and other oral health problems.

This month's bulletin focuses on practical, evidence-based habits that help protect oral health throughout life.

WHY DAILY ORAL HYGIENE MATTERS

Every day, bacteria naturally form a sticky film called dental plaque on the teeth and gums.

If plaque is not removed regularly, it can contribute to:

- Tooth decay (cavities)
- Gum inflammation (gingivitis)
- Periodontal disease
- Bad breath
- Tooth loss in advanced cases
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Daily oral hygiene helps remove plaque before it causes damage. Consistent prevention remains one of the most effective ways to maintain lifelong oral health.



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THE FOUR STEPS TO A HEALTHY SMILE

Healthy oral hygiene does not have to be complicated.

Brush

Brush twice each day for two minutes using fluoride toothpaste.

Clean Between Teeth

Use dental floss or interdental cleaners once every day to remove plaque where a toothbrush cannot

reach.

Eat Smart

Choose nutritious foods and reduce frequent sugary snacks and beverages.

Visit Your Dental Professional

Regular preventive examinations and professional cleanings help detect problems early and support long-term oral health.



IS YOUR TOOTHBRUSH READY?



Your toothbrush plays an important role in keeping your mouth healthy.

Remember to:

- ✓ Replace your toothbrush every three to four months.
- ✓ Replace it sooner if the bristles become frayed.
- ✓ Replace it after recovering from illnesses such as influenza or COVID-19.
- ✓ Store it upright and allow it to air dry between uses.

A clean, well-maintained toothbrush helps improve daily oral hygiene.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Plaque begins forming within hours after brushing.
- Fluoride toothpaste helps strengthen tooth enamel.
- Flossing removes plaque from areas that toothbrushes cannot reach.
- Preventive care is often less costly than treating advanced dental disease.

HEALTHY SMILE CHECKLIST

Every day:

- Brush twice daily.
- Floss once daily.
- Drink water throughout the day.
- Choose healthy snacks.
- Regularly:
- Visit a dental professional for preventive care.
- Healthy habits practiced consistently make the greatest difference.

MYTH VS. FACT

MYTH

"Brushing alone is enough to keep my teeth healthy."

FACT

Brushing is essential, but cleaning between the teeth every day helps remove plaque from areas that toothbrush bristles cannot effectively reach. Both habits work together to reduce the risk of cavities and gum disease.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Preventive dental services may be available through:

- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)
- Community Health Centers
- Dental school clinics
- Local public health departments
- Medicaid dental programs (for eligible individuals)
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

These resources help improve access to preventive oral healthcare for individuals and families.



THIS MONTH'S HEALTHY SMILE CHALLENGE

THIS MONTH, COMMIT TO IMPROVING YOUR DAILY ORAL HYGIENE

- ☐ **BRUSH TWICE EVERY DAY FOR TWO FULL MINUTES**
- ☐ **BRUSH TWICE DAILY**
- ☐ **FLOSS EVERY EVENING**
- ☐ **REPLACE YOUR TOOTHBRUSH IF IT IS MORE THAN THREE MONTHS OLD**
- ☐ **SCHEDULE A PREVENTIVE DENTAL EXAMINATION IF YOU ARE DUE**

Small daily habits create lasting healthy smiles.

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