

THE ORAL HEALTH EXPERT

DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA

MARCH 2020

OPEN WIDE SEE WHAT'S INSIDE



P.2 Are You Making the Most Common Toothbrushing Mistake?



P.3 3 Tips For After Wisdom Teeth Removal



P.4 Healthy Recipe: Homemade Applesauce

Why Should You Take Your Dentist's Advice?



By now you are likely familiar with your dentist's recommendation to brush twice a day for 2 minutes, floss daily and pay regular visits to their office. Here are the reasons behind these important nuggets of wisdom:

Brushing is all about the plaque.

Without brushing, plaque (a sticky film of bacteria) builds up on your teeth and gums and creates acid that eats away at important minerals on your tooth enamel. This can lead to decay, inflammation, bleeding and gum disease.

To keep a healthy smile, you should remove as much plaque as possible from your teeth and under your gumline each day. Two full minutes of brushing twice a day and the proper technique can adequately remove plaque. Yet, 32% of adults brush their teeth less than twice a day.¹

Flossing is nearly half the battle.

If you don't floss regularly, you miss out on cleaning a significant portion of the surfaces of your teeth, especially the spaces between teeth. Your dentist can tell if you're fibbing about flossing. Bleeding gums and plaque buildup are among the telltale signs. In fact, 44% of people admit to exaggerating to their dentist about their flossing habits.²

Putting off dental visits could cost you.

About 37% of adults don't see a dentist on an annual basis.³ Some people only go to the dentist when they are in pain. However, many oral problems don't cause pain until they become serious.

Your dentist can uncover cavities, gum disease, oral cancer and other oral health issues early on—when they're easier and less costly to treat. In addition, dozens of systemic diseases like diabetes, Crohn's, Sjogren's, HIV and blood disorders may show signs in your mouth.⁴ Your dentist may refer you to a physician for a closer look at potentially serious problems.

Your dentist cares about your oral and overall health and wants you to be proud of your smile. The next time you see the dentist, be sure to keep your ears open for some wise professional advice.

ARE YOU MAKING THE MOST COMMON TOOTHBRUSHING MISTAKE?



Brushing your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste is important. But there are a few common mistakes you can make when brushing your teeth that leave plaque behind, cause receding gums and damage tooth enamel. Find out what you're doing wrong and how to break these bad brushing habits:

You're brushing too hard.

Brushing your teeth harder won't get them cleaner. Plaque is a sticky, but soft film on teeth that doesn't require hard brushing to remove. In fact, too much elbow grease can cause receding gums. If you're brushing too hard, the pressure from your toothbrush shrinks your gum line, which protects the sensitive areas of your teeth.

To get rid of plaque, place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gums. Gently brush along your teeth and gum line in back-and-forth strokes. Be sure to brush all surfaces of your teeth. If you notice tooth sensitivity, gum swelling or bleeding in your mouth, ask your dentist if you could be brushing too hard.

You're using the wrong brush.

The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends using a soft-bristled brush, no matter if it's a manual or an electric toothbrush. Choose a toothbrush that has the ADA Seal of Acceptance on it. This seal means the toothbrush is safe and effective for removing plaque and reducing gum disease.

Don't forget to replace your toothbrush every 3 months or sooner if the bristles are frayed.

You're not brushing long enough.

Remember the saying "slow and steady wins the race"? It applies to toothbrushing too. According to the ADA, most people spend about 45 seconds brushing their teeth. That's well below the recommended 2 minutes for a clean mouth!

Use a clock or your cellphone timer to ensure you're brushing for the full 2 minutes. Try to switch your brushing location by mouth quadrant every 30 seconds—right, left, top and bottom.

If you have questions about the proper way to brush your teeth, ask your hygienist or dentist at your next visit. They can show you the best way to brush to keep your smile healthy!

SMILE STATS



After immigrating in 1760, John Baker became the first medically trained dentist to practice in America.⁵



The oldest person to grow a wisdom tooth was 94 years old when the tooth erupted.⁶



The first mass-produced toothbrush was invented in prison by William Addis in 1770.⁷

3 Tips For After Wisdom Teeth Removal



Wisdom teeth—a third set of molars in the back of your mouth—usually appear between ages 17 and 25. Some people have them taken out, while others never have the need. In fact, about 5 million Americans have theirs removed each year.⁸

Wisdom teeth are usually extracted because:

- They are impacted (trapped in gums or jawbone)
- They are growing in at the wrong angle
- The jaw doesn't have room for them
- They are causing pain
- Cavities or gum disease have developed

Wisdom tooth extraction is usually performed as an outpatient operation, so you can go home the same day. Your oral surgeon will use a local anesthetic to numb the areas around the teeth being extracted. You may be offered sedation so you're more comfortable during the procedure.

After the procedure, you'll need to take proper care of the area to avoid any post-surgery complications. Here are 3 ways to help you heal:

Prevent dry sockets.

Dry sockets occur after as many as 5% of tooth extractions.⁹ A dry socket happens when a blood clot doesn't form properly or dislodges before the area is healed. Symptoms show up a couple of days after surgery and include pain that may spread to the ear, bad breath and a bad taste in your mouth.

To help prevent dry socket, avoid forcefully rinsing your mouth for 24 hours after surgery. You should also avoid using a straw because the suction can dislodge your blood clot. If you are a smoker, don't smoke for at least 48 hours to aid the healing process and lessen the chance of disturbing the blood clot.

Watch what you eat and drink.

For at least 24 hours after surgery, eat small bites of soft foods that require little chewing, like eggs and applesauce. If you eat soup, make sure it's not too hot. Avoid hard, crunchy or sticky foods that can irritate the area that is healing. Stay hydrated with water, but remember not to use a straw.




Treat your discomfort.

Expect to experience some soreness after surgery. To help ease your discomfort:

- Follow your dentist's recommendations for activity, food, drink and pain relief
- Use an ice pack to decrease swelling
- Switch to moist heat after 36 hours
- Gently open and close your mouth to exercise your jaw
- Be sure to get lots of rest

You will likely recover from your procedure in a week or less. However, the spot where your tooth was will heal and fill in with new bone for the next few months. If you experience any continuing pain, follow up with your dentist right away.

MOUTH-HEALTHY RECIPE: HOMEMADE APPLESAUCE

Ingredients:	Directions:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chop apples into small pieces. 2. Place all ingredients into pot and stir. Bring mixture to a boil. 3. Cover with lid and reduce heat to simmer for 20 minutes. 4. Remove from heat.
6 apples, peeled and chopped	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Mash or blend to desired consistency. 6. Let cool before serving.
	
1/2 cup of water	
	
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon	

WANT MORE ORAL HEALTH TIPS AND NEWS?
 VISIT THE DELTA DENTAL OF ARIZONA BLOG
deltadentalazblog.com



CONNECT with us



SOURCES

¹Delta Dental 2019 Adult's Oral Health & Well-Being Survey

²<https://www.ada.org/en/publications/ada-news/2017-archive/october/new-survey-highlights-unusual-flossing-habits>

³Delta Dental 2019 Adult's Oral Health & Well-Being Survey

⁴<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/dental-exams-can-detect-disease-elsewhere#>

⁵<https://www.ada.org/en/member-center/ada-library/dental-history>

⁶https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/oldest-person-to-grow-a-wisdom-tooth?fb_comment_id=749151035164406_935931379819703

⁷<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/t/toothbrushes>

⁸<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1963310/>

⁹<https://www.webmd.com/oral-health/guide/dry-socket-symptoms-and-treatment#1>