



## A healthier mouth, a healthier you

### Your oral health matters more than you think

By having good oral care habits, you can ward off cavities and avoid bad breath. It can help you keep your smile looking beautiful and bright. Studies show that taking good care of your teeth and gums may lead to better overall health. This means what goes on in your mouth can affect the rest of your body. And what goes on in your body can also affect your mouth.

### A big role in your overall well-being

Having a healthy mouth and smile can do more than just boost your self-esteem. It can also help you avoid mouth problems, such as gum disease. Gum disease can increase your risk for other serious health problems, too.<sup>1</sup> When you practice good oral care you can:

- Cut your risk for heart disease
- Lower your risk for stroke

<sup>1</sup> Harvard Medical School. Gum disease and heart disease: The common thread. Available at: [Health.Harvard.edu/heart-health/gum-disease-and-heart-disease-the-common-thread](http://Health.Harvard.edu/heart-health/gum-disease-and-heart-disease-the-common-thread).

# Make time for your mouth health

How you can help protect your mouth:



Limit your sugar intake. Food and drinks containing a lot of sugar can cause tooth decay.



Brush twice a day. Try for at least two minutes each time. This removes plaque, which can lead to damaged teeth, gums and surrounding bone.



Visit your dentist regularly. Schedule dental checkups at least twice a year.



Clean your tongue. Practice cleaning it with a scraper or a soft-bristle toothbrush. Stroke in a back-to-front direction.



Avoid using tobacco. It can cause gum disease or oral cancer.



Floss daily. This removes plaque and food particles from places where a toothbrush can't easily reach.

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