

## Your Oral Health Affects Your Overall Health

Research shows that taking care of your teeth and gums is just as important to your health and well-being as looking after the rest of your body.

Periodontal disease — an infection of the gums — is linked to other chronic diseases:

- **heart disease and stroke**
- **lung infections**
- **diabetes** (high blood sugar)
- **osteoporosis** (bone loss)



### Remember!

You may retire but your teeth don't!  
It's important to take care of your teeth  
and gums to ensure a healthy body.

## Visit Your Dentist

Visit your dentist every year whether 55 or 95 years old, even if you wear dentures. At your dental visit:

- Tell your dentist if you need help with brushing and flossing
- Inform your dentist about changes or trouble signs in your mouth
- Ask your dentist about tips for dry mouth or other oral health issues
- Let your dentist know about any new or existing health conditions
- Bring a complete list of medications with you, including over-the-counter products

### YOUR DENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Learn more at [youroralhealth.ca](http://youroralhealth.ca)

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## Oral Health Care for Older Adults



## Watch for Trouble Signs

**Gum disease** is caused by bacteria in the mouth. Watch for red, swollen gums when you brush or floss.

**Oral cancer** occurs most often in older adults. If you use tobacco products or drink alcohol, you are at greater risk. See a dentist immediately if you notice any of the following on your lips, gums, on or under the tongue or the inside of cheeks:

- red or white patches
- sores that don't heal
- unusual hard spots

**Dry mouth** occurs when saliva flow is reduced. This can lead to discomfort and can make it hard to eat and speak, as well as increase tooth decay.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Adults are keeping their natural teeth longer. With regular dental visits and daily mouth care, you can keep your natural smile for years to come.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Many medications can cause dry mouth and inflamed gums and are also high in sugar. If you have dry mouth, avoid sucking on hard candies or lozenges as this also bathes your teeth in sugar. High sugar and a dry mouth provide an ideal place for the tooth decay causing bacteria to live.

## Brush and Floss Daily

Daily mouth care is the simplest way to keep teeth and gums healthy, regardless of age. Brush teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste to protect teeth against decay. Consider using a fluoride mouth rinse every evening for added protection. Don't forget to brush your tongue and floss daily, too!

Speak to your dentist if you have any questions about your oral health.



## Hard to Brush or Floss?

If holding a toothbrush or flossing is hard for you, talk to your dentist about ways to overcome this problem. Certain dental products, such as electric toothbrushes and floss aids, can help.

## Take Care of Dentures

Just like natural teeth, dentures should be cleaned daily to prevent gum irritation or bad breath.

Use a toothbrush or denture brush and denture cleaner or mild soap and water. Rinse dentures well before putting them back in the mouth.

Always take your dentures out at night to give your mouth a chance to rest. Be sure to clean and massage your gums with a clean, damp cloth or soft toothbrush.

Have your dentures fitted properly by a professional and ask about labelling dentures if needed.