# A Healthy Mouth is Important to Your Overall Health

**MOTIVATE at Home**
Maine's Oral Team-Based Initiative:
Vital Access to Education
*Nurturing Oral Wellness Every Step of the Way*

For good health in your body, take good care of your whole mouth.

## Brush and Floss Daily

Before you begin, gather all of your supplies.

- Clean teeth every day with a toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss. Bacteria and germs quickly grow and multiply in your mouth and can make you sick.
- Brush gently in a circular motion at a 45 degree angle for two minutes with a soft toothbrush. Brushing twice daily is best.
- Use toothpaste that contains fluoride.
- Floss gently between your teeth.

## Look for Signs of Oral Health Problems

Even though your teeth may look white and clean, you can still have problems. That's why it's important to brush and floss every day. Bacteria can lead to infections in your mouth and other parts of your body.

Look for Signs of Oral Health Problems

- Tooth decay
- Red, swollen, or bleeding gums
- Mouth infections
- Pain in your teeth or gums
- Bad smelling breath

## Make an Appointment with a Dentist

Even if you brush and floss every day, every person should still see a dentist and dental hygienist every year for regular exams and cleanings. Don't wait until your mouth hurts! Talk to your health care provider if you have concerns and cannot get in to see a dental provider.

## Caring for Dentures and Partials

- Handle the dentures or partials carefully. To avoid breaking, clean over a folded towel or sink full of water.
- Brush and rinse daily with a soft-bristle brush.
- Use denture cleaning products with the ADA Seal of Acceptance. Avoid cleaning them with bleach or toothpaste.
- It is important to remove your dentures daily and soak in a denture cleaner overnight as directed.
- Always rinse the dentures or partials before putting them back in the mouth.

# FAQs

1. **Examples of oral health symptoms that can be monitored.**
   - ⊘ Chipped tooth
   - ⊘ Mildly dry lips
   - ⊘ Small amount of bleeding during brushing/flossing
   - ⊘ The start of a small sore on the tongue or mouth lining

   **Examples of oral health symptoms that should be assessed urgently.**
   - ⊘ Painful cracked tooth
   - ⊘ Fever with any emergent symptoms
   - ⊘ Swelling or drainage (pus) in the gums
   - ⊘ Severe mouth pain

2. **Why is oral health important?**
   - ⊘ Oral health includes the health of the teeth and gums, and the ability to speak and chew comfortably.
   - ⊘ Common diseases that affect our oral health include cavities, gum disease, and oral cancer.
   - ⊘ Oral health is linked to overall health, self-esteem, and quality of life in many ways you may not have realized. (download)
   - ⊘ You should brush your teeth in the morning and at night. Brushing twice a day is important as foods leave debris on teeth that feed bacteria. Too much bacteria can lead to cavities, gum disease and more.

   **Why are older adults more at risk of oral disease?**
3.
   - ⊘ 80% of older adults experience one or more chronic diseases.
   - ⊘ Older adults with dementia have the highest risk, as they are often unable to clean their own teeth or dentures.
   - ⊘ Most older adults don't have dental insurance and cannot afford to pay for care.
   - ⊘ Over 25% have not seen a dentist in the last five years.
   - ⊘ Many older adults need restorative oral care.

4. **What is the right way to brush?**
   - ⊘ Use a soft toothbrush twice a day for two minutes. Brush your teeth, gums and tongue using a circular motion. Hold the brush at a 45-degree angle to the gum. Use an ADA approved fluoride toothpaste.

5. **Is an electric toothbrush better than a manual toothbrush?**
   - ⊘ An electric or spin brush can be more efficient, but both are effective.

6. **What can I do for dry mouth?**
   - ⊘ Talk to your health care provider about your medications. Try an over-the-counter ADA approved rinse such as Biotene.

7. **What toothpaste should I use?**
   - ⊘ Use toothpaste that is approved by the American Dental Association.
   - ⊘ Your toothpaste should include fluoride.

8. **I can't use floss very well from the roll. What else can I do besides get a water pic?**
   - ⊘ Try dental pics

9. **Which anticavity rinses are best?**
   - ⊘ Rinse once a day with a non-alcohol, ADA approved fluoride rinse.

10. **Do I need to remove and clean my dentures?**
    - ⊘ Yes, it's important to remove and clean your dentures every evening before bedtime. Before you remove your dentures, place a folded towel in front of you to protect your dentures in case they fall. Use denture cleaning products approved by the ADA. Avoid cleaning with bleach or toothpaste. Soak in a denture cleaner overnight.

**Learn more at oralhealthwisdom.com**