

Dental Care:

Tooth decay and gum disease are largely caused by plaque, a sticky combination of bacteria and food. Plaque begins to accumulate on teeth within 20 minutes after eating. If this plaque is not removed thoroughly each day, tooth decay will flourish. Over time, plaque will harden into tartar which can lead to a number of problems, such as: cavities, gingivitis, bad breath, abscesses and other health problems (e.g., heart disease). For healthy teeth and gums:

1. Brush teeth at least twice daily, preferably after every meal and at bedtime. Ask your dentist what toothbrush you should use and where problem areas are located.
2. Floss at least once per day. Overly vigorous or improper flossing may injure the gums so check with your dentist on how to properly floss.
3. Schedule an appointment with a dentist for a routine cleaning and examination, preferably every 6 months.
4. Keep dentures, retainers and appliances clean.
5. Check with your dentist to find out if you should use any special tools, such as water irrigation or electric toothbrushes and if you would benefit from particular toothpastes or mouth rinses.