

Advice for Adults

- **Avoid tobacco products.** Tobacco can cause gum erosion, bad breath, oral cancer, and stained teeth.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** What you eat affects your oral health as well as overall health.
- **Don't forget to drink water.** If drinking fizzy or acidic drinks, **use a straw** to decrease the interaction of acid on your teeth.
- Chew **sugar-free** gum.
- **Pregnant women** should schedule an appointment with their dentist. Hormone changes during pregnancy can cause gum problems such as inflammation and bleeding.⁴ Tell your dentist about any problems.
- Talk to your dentist about **dry mouth**. Many medications and health conditions can cause dry mouth. Your dentist can recommend products to increase saliva flow and help prevent tooth decay.



References

1. Texas Health Institute. (2018). [Oral Health In Texas: Bridging Gaps And Filling Needs.](#)
2. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. (2018). [Dental Caries \(Tooth Decay\) in Adults \(ages 20 to 64\).](#)
3. American Dental Association, (2006). [Healthy mouth, healthy body.](#)
4. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). [Oral Health: Pregnancy.](#)

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Adult Oral Health



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

Healthy Teeth
Make Healthy Adults

Oral Health in Texas

More than half of Texans ages 45-64 have lost teeth because of oral diseases.¹ Ninety-two percent of American adults have had cavities in their permanent teeth.²

Poor oral health can contribute to chronic diseases such as diabetes, stroke, obesity, and other cardiovascular diseases.³

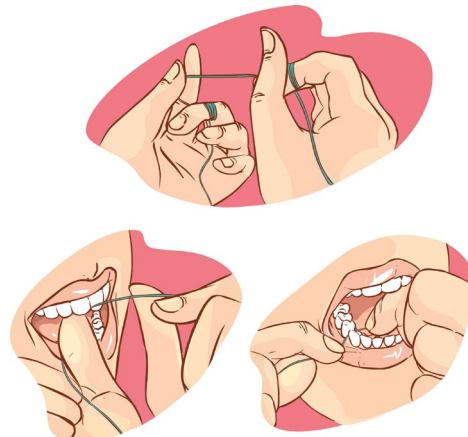


Factors Contributing to Poor Oral Health

- **Alcohol and tobacco use** can dry the mouth and increase risk of developing dental caries, periodontal disease, and oral cancer.
- **Poor diet** can contribute to poor oral health. Frequent sugar intake by snacking or drinking soda increases the amount of acid in the mouth. Acid causes tooth decay.
- **Lack of routine dental care.** Routine dental visits help prevent dental issues and address them early if they do arise. Every 15 seconds, someone visits a hospital emergency department for dental concerns.¹

Home Care

- **Two for two.** Brush twice a day for two minutes. Use a soft bristled brush and circular motions. Time yourself by listening to your favorite song. Be sure you brush before bedtime.
- **Use products with fluoride, like mouthwash and toothpaste.** Fluoride strengthens enamel and protects it from plaque and bacteria.
- **Limit sugary snacks and acidic drinks.** Drink water between meals.
- **Check with your dentist if you wake up with headaches or jaw pain.** This may be a sign of clenching your jaw or grinding your teeth while you sleep.
- **Floss at least once a day.** Gently bring the floss between two teeth and down to the gum line. Wrap the floss around one tooth in the shape of the letter “C”. Move the floss up and down the side of that tooth. Wrap the floss around the tooth on the other side and repeat. Continue this between all your teeth.



Ways to Improve your Oral Health

- **Remove Stains** – A good home care routine and regular dental cleanings can help reduce staining. If stains are still present, talk to your dentist about proper whitening or bleaching treatments. Some whitening products can cause sensitivity.
- **Prevent Bruxism (Grinding)** – Bruxism can happen both during the day and at night. It can lead to headaches, damaged teeth, and more. Talk to your dentist about available solutions.
- **Reduce Bad Breath** – A good home care routine helps reduce bad breath. Don't forget to clean your tongue! If you still experience bad breath, speak to your dentist.
- **Treat Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)** – If you find yourself snoring, waking with a dry mouth, or having a poor night's sleep, talk to your dentist about OSA. OSA can lead to increased tooth decay due to dry mouth and other health problems.
- **Prevent Oral Cancer** – Avoid tobacco and alcohol use. Ask your primary care physician about the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine. This vaccine can help prevent head, neck, and oral cancers.

Make sure to visit the dentist twice a year for checkups and cleanings.