



## MIDWEST DENTAL

*Your Teeth, Your Health, Your Choice.*

### Guidelines For A Healthy Smile

- **Clean your teeth**
  - **Brushing** - Removes plaque from the inside, outside, and chewing surfaces of teeth
    - Select a brush with **soft bristles**
    - Be sure to replace your toothbrush as soon as the bristles look bent or frayed, after an illness, or every 3 - 4 months
  - **Flossing** - Flossing removes the plaque from in between your teeth and under the gum line
  - **Checking Plaque Removal** - Disclosing (staining) tablet or solution
    - Made of harmless vegetable dyes that stain the plaque a bright color
  
- **Fluoride**
  - **Drink Fluoridated Water** - Community water fluoridation has been shown to reduce dental decay by as much as 40%
  - **Have Fluoride Applied in your Dental Office** - Your dentist may recommend an in-office treatment in the form of fluoride varnish which is painted on, or a tray treatment containing gel or foam fluoride
  - **Toothpaste** - Brush with a **Fluoride** Toothpaste that has the American Dental Association (**ADA**) seal of approval on the package or tube
  - **Use a Home Fluoride or Fluoride Supplement** - Your dentist may recommend a prescription fluoride for home use with a higher concentration of fluoride than over-the-counter products
  
- **Regular Dental Visits**
  - Checked for signs of dental diseases, review your plaque control techniques, provide ongoing nutrition and dietary counseling
  - Teeth professionally cleaned, x-rays taken, screening for dental decay and oral cancer
  
- **Diet**
  - Necessary for proper growth and development and for keeping the body healthy
  - Teeth, bones, and soft tissues of the mouth also need a well balanced diet
  - Sweet, sticky food should be served only with meals since they are less harmful to teeth when eaten along with other foods
  - Continuous exposure throughout the day to high sugar foods and beverages can cause an increased risk of decay for children and adults
  
- **Soda/Pop/Sport or Energy Drinks**
  - Drinking an abundance of these drinks can erode the top layer of enamel that is protecting your teeth, which can lead to cavities, or sensitivity
  - Limit the amount of these drinks consumed - water is the BEST choice
  
- **Tooth Decay (Cavities)**
  - Caused by acid causing bacteria - linked to eating and drinking food high in starch and sugars
  - Prevent tooth decay by brushing/flossing regularly, visiting your dentist, and reduce sweets and between-meal snacks

- **Sealants**
  - Thin, plastic film painted on the chewing surfaces of molars and premolars
  - Acts as a barrier to decay - Highly effective in the prevention of cavities
  
- **Mouthguards**
  - Wear a mouthguard at all times while training and competing in sports, particularly contact sports such as football, basketball, hockey, wrestling or boxing
  - Types of athletic mouth guards: Custom-fitted by your Dentist, mouth-formed, store-bought
  
- **Orthodontics or Braces**
  - Braces can improve appearance: Straighter, more even looking teeth
  - Braces can improve your dental health and your overall health
    - Some orthodontic problems make it hard to bite and chew
    - Other problems can increase risk for cavities or gum disease by making it hard to clean teeth
  - Types of braces
    - Traditional metal braces
    - Transparent or tooth-colored plastic braces with thinner wires
    - Invisalign - Removable clear aligners (Alternative to traditional metal braces)
  
- **Addictive Habits**
  - Smokeless Tobacco
    - Causes bad breath, discolors teeth, promote tooth decay, and leads to tooth loss
    - Increases risk of Oral Cancer
  - Smoking
    - Can lead to periodontal disease which leads to tooth loss
    - Causes chronic bad breath and badly stained teeth
    - Increases risk of Oral and Lung Cancer
  - Bulimia (binging and purging)
    - Causes erosion of the backside of upper front teeth from the gastric acid in vomit
    - Can cause a sore in the corner of the mouth - a red burn caused by acid exposure