

# Tips for Good Oral Health



## Five Steps to a Healthy Smile

1. Brush your teeth twice a day using a soft bristled toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.
2. Get a new toothbrush every 3 months.
3. Floss your teeth every day to clean between your teeth where a toothbrush cannot reach.
4. See a dentist at least once a year, even if you have no natural teeth or wear dentures.
5. Drink plenty of water, chew sugarless gum, do not use tobacco products, and limit sugary and alcoholic drinks.

## Reasons to See Your Dentist at Least Once a Year

- Cleaning removes stains and plaque from your teeth
- Check for early signs of cancer in your mouth
- Check to make sure your dentures are fitting okay
- Identify problems before they become serious and cause pain or infection
- Help prevent tooth loss due to loose teeth, cavities, infection, or gum disease
- Help check for other medical problems, such as high blood pressure and diabetes
- Check for damage caused by bad habits such as chewing on ice, biting your nails, grinding your teeth and smoking



## When to Contact Your Dentist with Concerns

- Chipped tooth
- Constant dull tooth pain
- Gums that bleed when you brush
- Red, tender, or swollen gums or sensitive teeth
- Cracked filling or a cap that comes off a tooth
- Problems with chewing or swallowing
- Changes in the way your dentures fit
- Sores in your mouth that do not heal
- Bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth that does not go away after brushing your teeth

### TIP:

Most dentists leave an emergency number on their answering machine message for you to call if you have a serious dental problem after their business hours.

## When to Call Your Dentist Right Away and Not Wait

- Broken tooth
- Loose or knocked out tooth
- Bleeding that will not stop
- Very painful or throbbing toothache
- Swollen cheek or painful swelling in your cheek or neck
- White bump on your gum that is getting bigger

## When to Go to the Hospital Emergency Room

- When you are unable to reach your dentist after hours and have severe symptoms or pain
- Jaw fractures or dislocation
- Swelling that visibly spreads across the face and down the neck
- Serious tears, cuts, or punctures inside the cheeks, lips, or tongue
- Heavy bleeding in your mouth that will not stop
- If you have injured your head and damaged your teeth and jaw

[More Information and Resources on Back](#)

## Finding a Dentist

If you need help finding a dentist or are having problems getting an appointment with your dentist, please call Member Services at 1-800-774-9049, TTY/TDD users call 711.

## Transportation Assistance

RideConnect offers Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) to and from dental appointments to qualified members for covered services. For more information, call Member Services at 1-866-567-7242, TTY/TDD users call 1-800-627-3529 or 711.

## Oral Health Resources

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/health-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/dental/art-20045536?p=1>

[http://seniorsoralhealth.org/oral-hygiene-guidelines-preventing-dental-disease/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1498146603.2632050514221191406250](http://seniorsoralhealth.org/oral-hygiene-guidelines-preventing-dental-disease/?doing_wp_cron=1498146603.2632050514221191406250)

<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/dental-care-concerns/dental-emergencies>

<https://data.web.health.state.mn.us/web/mndata/oral-health>

<https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/basics/adult-oral-health/tips.html>



**Member Services 1-866-567-7242 ♦ TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711**

Hours of Service: Feb. 15 to Sept. 30, M-F, 8 am to 8 pm;

Oct. 1 to Feb. 14, 7 days a week, 8 am to 8 pm

Visit or website: [www.mnscha.org](http://www.mnscha.org)

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