



Dental problems can and do occur in teens. Becoming better informed about issues that effect oral health can make it easier to make the best decisions for you!

# Teens & Oral Health

**Most people don't like the dentist, so why not prevent cavities before they begin?**

There is a link between oral health and overall wellness. Dental decay is the most common chronic disease in young people between the ages of 5 and 17 (CDC). With adolescence being the time of peak bone growth, it is important to have a nutrient rich diet. Unfortunately, many teens' diets are full of soda and sugary, high carbohydrate foods.



The phosphoric, citric, tartaric and/or carbonic acid in soda is breaking down tooth enamel, which leads to extensive dental treatment later on.



*Take care of your teeth and make your smile last a lifetime*

## Dentist

Everyone should visit the dentist every 6 months to help prevent tooth decay, gum disease and other disorders that put the health of your teeth and mouth at risk.

## Dental Issues

**Orthodontics:** A lot of pre-teens and teens require braces to fix crowded or crooked teeth and poor jaw alignment.

Orthodontics isn't just good to fix the look of your teeth, if your teeth are crooked, it's more difficult to keep them clean. If you have braces, take extra care in cleaning your teeth properly.

**Mouth Guards:** It is important to wear a mouth guard when playing sports to protect your smile.

**Nutrition:** The sugars and starches in what you eat and drink supports the formation of plaque. Plaque destroys teeth enamel. The acids in sugary snacks and drinks attack your teeth for twenty minutes or more after.

**Smoking:** Smoking can stain your teeth and gums and contribute to bad breath. Overall, smoking and chewing increases your risk of developing oral cancer and gum disease.

**Oral Piercings:** Oral piercings can cause infections, uncontrollable bleeding and nerve damage. Metal jewelry can chip or crack teeth and damage your gums.

**Eating Disorders:** Bulimia and anorexia are serious disorders that affect the appearance of teeth by eroding the tooth enamel.

## Brushing



Place bristles along the gumline at 45-degree angle. Bristles should contact the tooth surface and the gumline.



Gently brush the outer tooth surfaces of 2-3 teeth using the vibrating back, forth and rolling motion. Move to the next group of 2-3 teeth and repeat.



Maintain a 45-degree angle with the bristles contacting the tooth surface and gumline. Gently brush using back, forth and rolling motion along all of the inner tooth surfaces.



Tilt brush vertically behind the front teeth. Make several up & down strokes using the front half of the brush.



Place the brush against the biting surface of the teeth & use gentle back & forth scrubbing motion. Brush the tongue from back to front to remove odor-producing bacteria.



Wind 18" of floss around middle fingers of each hand. Pinch floss between thumbs and index fingers, leaving 1"-2" length in between. Use thumbs to direct floss between upper teeth.



Keep a 1"-2" length of floss taut between fingers. Use index fingers to guide floss between contacts of the lower teeth.

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Gently guide floss between the teeth by using a zigzag motion. Do not snap floss between your teeth!



Slide floss up and down against the tooth surface and under the gumline. Floss each tooth thoroughly with a clean section of floss.



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