

# October is Dental Hygiene Month



## Dental Care: Oral Hygiene

Oral health problems—ranging from cavities to cancer—are painful and costly, affecting millions of people each year. This is alarming because almost all oral diseases can be prevented with the proper knowledge and prevention techniques.

### Tooth Decay

Tooth decay is also a problem for adults, especially for the increasing number who retain most of their teeth throughout their lives. In addition, tooth loss can become an issue as adults get older. Tooth loss can affect self-esteem and may contribute to nutrition problems by limiting the types of food that someone can eat. In addition, poor oral hygiene can lead to a number of diseases and conditions, including gum disease, oral cancer and more.

### Prevention

Keep your oral health in good shape by practicing the following:

- Drink fluoridated water and use fluoride toothpaste.
- Take care of your teeth and gums. Thoroughly brushing and flossing can reduce dental plaque and prevent gingivitis.
- Avoid tobacco. In addition to the many other health risks posed by tobacco, smokers have four times the risk of developing gum disease as non-smokers.
- Limit alcohol consumption. Heavy use of alcohol is also a risk factor for oral and throat cancers.
- Eat wisely. Adults should avoid snacks with sugars and starches. Limit the number of snacks eaten throughout the day.