

Transforming Smiles... *Transforming Lives...*

The Economics of Preventive Care

Your teeth don't hurt, your breath is fine, and you're careful about your daily oral-hygiene routine. You're thinking you could probably skip that next preventive dental appointment, but is that really economically wise?

Missing a dental appointment can be step-one toward allowing decay or gum disease to take hold in your mouth. Routine preventive appointments can catch these issues earlier, when they are less expensive to treat. If time is allowed to pass, dental decay and gum disease may take root, leading to cavities, discomfort, and even loose teeth.

Early warning signs of decay and gum disease may not be easily recognized by a patient. Gum disease can manifest itself in swollen gums that are tender and bleed easily. Tooth decay is insidious and may not cause any discomfort until restorations or root canal treatment and a crown are necessary to save the tooth.

The smart money is on preventive care, which starts with homecare that includes brushing at least twice a day with a fluoride paste and flossing daily. Rinsing with a rinse containing fluoride is a wise move as well.

Preventive dental checkups, including cleanings, exams, and X-rays when necessary, should generally occur every six months, and more often if your dentist deems that necessary.

Think about how important your teeth are every single day. Your teeth are necessary to essential functions of life, including eating, speaking, and smiling with ease to communicate emotion. What better investment than in the health and longevity of your natural teeth!

Brush Right!

Here are a few steps to help you brush more effectively:

- 1. Spend at least two minutes brushing**—30 seconds for each quadrant of your mouth. Set a timer if necessary.
- 2. Begin with the outsides of the teeth**—uppers first, and then lowers.
- 3. Progress to the inner sides of the teeth** in the same order.
- 4. Spend time cleansing the chewing surfaces.** Be sure to work the bristles gently into the indentations.
- 5. Don't forget to brush your tongue and inside your cheeks** to help remove bacteria and freshen breath.

If you aren't sure that your brushing technique is doing the best job for your teeth, ask us for help. We can give you pointers to meet your specific needs and help you keep your pearly whites gleaming.



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the patients of
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Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!



TRUTH DECAY— *Hard Facts About Cavities*

Test your knowledge of these cavity facts. Answers are printed at the bottom of the page.

1. ___ **True or** ___ **False** The main culprit behind cavities is sugar consumption.
2. ___ **True or** ___ **False** Concern about cavities decreases with age.
3. ___ **True or** ___ **False** Intense pain is usually the first sign of a cavity.
4. ___ **True or** ___ **False** Grinding the teeth is dangerous because it causes decay.
5. ___ **True or** ___ **False** Tooth sensitivity is a sign that tooth decay is present.

Dangerous Foods

Some foods are obviously harmful to teeth, but others appear safe. Here are three food items you may not have guessed pose hidden dangers to teeth:



1. Ice—*Liquid* water is actually good for teeth, but chewing ice can damage them because of the intense pressure needed to crack an ice cube or crushed ice. This habit can cause wear and tear and even lead to chips and cracks in teeth.

2. Potato chips—Potato chips are laden with fat and salt, but the problems they cause for teeth are subtle. Tiny particles of chips stick easily between teeth and in crevices. In addition, because potatoes are carbohydrates, which also become sugars, they stimulate bacterial activity, which can lead to decay.



3. Raisins—

They're derived from grapes, which are fruits, so by association one might think raisins are a healthy snack. Unfortunately, dried fruits are sticky and loaded with a natural form of sugar, called fructose. A bit of raisin stuck to your tooth could be as damaging as a piece of candy wedged there.



Answers for "TRUTH DECAY"

1. **False**—While sugar is often blamed for cavity development, it's actually the acid produced by bacteria that feed on sugar and other carbohydrates, such as those found in potato chips, that can cause bacterial activity leading to decay.
2. **False**—Due to preventive measures such as fluoridated water, cavities among children have declined. Conversely, medications required to maintain the health of many senior citizens can cause dry mouth. Lack of saliva can lead to decay, resulting in a rise in cavities in this age group.
3. **False**—Signs of decay can be detected during a dental exam while a cavity is still small, located in the enamel, and not causing pain. Cavities that are detected while still small are easier to treat.
4. **False**—Grinding does not cause decay, but it can lead to loss of enamel, which renders tooth surfaces more vulnerable to decay.
5. **False**—Sensitivity to cold, hot, or very sweet foods can be a sign of loss of enamel but not necessarily decay. However, any discomfort in the teeth should be diagnosed by a dental professional.



Attention—CPAP Users

The World's First Automated CPAP Cleaner and Sanitizing Machine

If you use a CPAP, this article is for you. I have become aware of an automated CPAP cleaner and sanitizer that will make your life easier and keep you healthier. It is called **SoClean**, and let me add that I don't benefit in any way from this company. I just love the ease of use and the idea of activated oxygen (no chemicals) that kills 99 percent of the bacteria.

Would you like to sanitize all of your CPAP equipment without removing the CPAP mask, hose, or reservoir? The SoClean CPAP cleaning unit connects with all types of PAP equipment, including CPAP, Bi-PAP, BPAP, and VPAP. Also, the SoClean CPAP sanitizer uses the same sanitizing process found in hospital sanitizing. The SoClean is used at home, and the **SoClean 2 Go** is portable for those who need a solution when they travel.

Take a look at their website at www.soclean.com and see what you think. I think it is a very innovative product.



Tooth Facts

1. How you eat and drink matters—Snacking and sipping are simply not good for teeth. Every time a carbohydrate-laden snack or sugary liquid comes in contact with your teeth, bacteria that cause decay are activated. Try to limit between-meal snacking and sip water rather than soda or sports drinks to stay hydrated.

2. Brush well, but don't rinse—While swallowing toothpaste isn't recommended, it's okay to simply spit and skip rinsing with water after brushing. Rinsing with water removes fluoride, which is obviously more effective at preventing decay when it remains in contact with your teeth. A fluoride rinse, though, provides added protection.

3. Saliva is tops for fighting decay—The natural moisture in your mouth is also the best weapon you have against decay. Saliva works to neutralize the decay-causing process by washing away the acids that can literally eat holes in your teeth. Dry mouth, which can be caused by age and certain medications, can interfere with this built-in line of defense. If you suffer from dry mouth, get in the habit of sipping water to keep your mouth hydrated and ward off decay.

Protection from Gum Recession

Gum recession occurs when the gum recedes or shrinks away from a tooth, leaving more of the root exposed. The exposed root is more susceptible to decay.

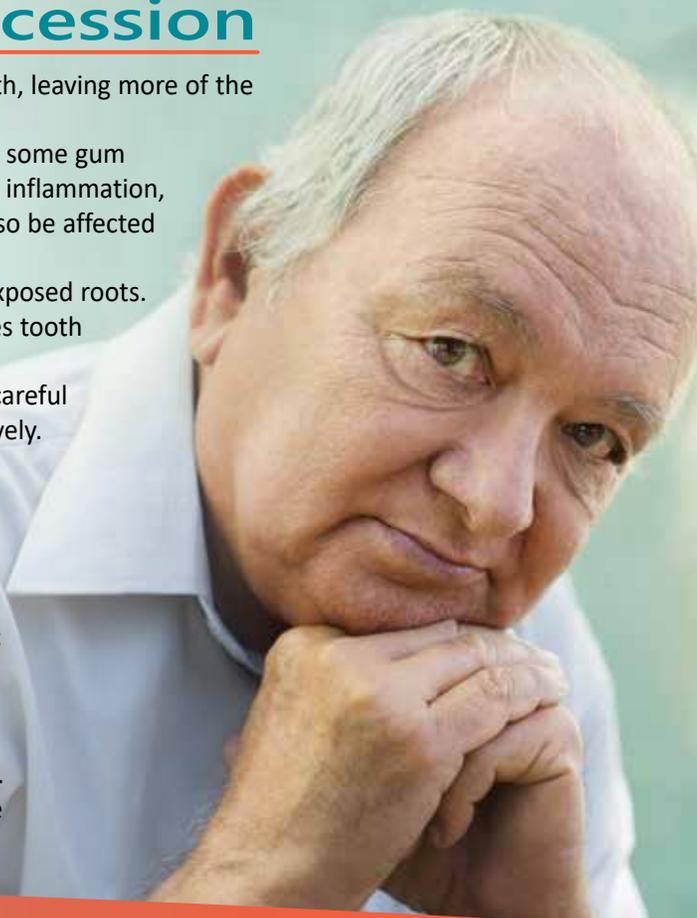
Causes of gum recession vary, but most people over the age of 65 exhibit some gum recession. Gum recession can be related to a lack of good oral hygiene, gum inflammation, heredity, and wear and tear caused by brushing too vigorously. Gums can also be affected by periodontal disease, which can lead to tooth loss.

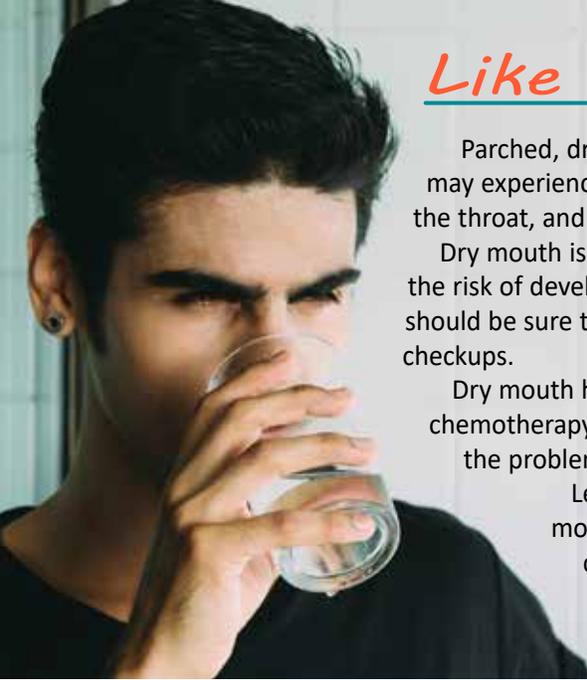
Individuals who experience gum recession may notice sensitivity in the exposed roots. In other cases, the teeth begin to appear longer, and in some advanced cases tooth loss can occur.

Sometimes gum disease can be prevented with good oral hygiene and a careful brushing technique with a soft-bristled brush and not brushing too aggressively. Some cases of gum recession are mild and require little treatment.

When gum recession results in sensitivity, a desensitizing paste or a bonding agent may be recommended. These treatments work to reduce sensitivity in the exposed root. In other cases, composite material can be used on the root surface. The material can even be colored pink to match the gums. Other treatments may include using gingival veneers, orthodontic treatments that alter the gumline, or surgical procedures that use tissue from another part of the mouth to cover the recessed area.

The gums are important to protecting the roots of the teeth from decay. You can help to protect your gums by caring for them thoroughly and gently. If you want to learn more about how you can prevent gum recession, please feel free to ask at your next appointment.





Like a Desert

Parched, dry, desperate for a sip of a cold drink...a patient who is suffering from dry mouth may experience these symptoms and more. The dry, sticky feeling in the mouth may extend into the throat, and the patient may experience difficulty swallowing, tasting, and even speaking.

Dry mouth isn't just uncomfortable; it's dangerous to teeth. A lack of saliva in the mouth raises the risk of developing both cavities and gum disease. For this reason, patients with dry mouth should be sure to use a fluoride toothpaste as well as a fluoride rinse, and to keep regular dental checkups.

Dry mouth has a number of causes, including diseases, medical treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation, and certain medications. Tobacco use is known to exacerbate the problem.

Less severe cases of dry mouth may be easily remedied by using a humidifier to moisten the air in one's home, drinking plenty of water, and using sugar-free gum or candy to encourage saliva production. In more serious cases, saliva substitutes or medications that promote saliva production may be recommended.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Things Teens Do to Their Teeth

The teen years can be tough on teeth for a number of reasons. Teenagers tend to want to try new things, dabble in grown-up activities, and take part in sports where a mouth injury is possible.

During their child's teen years, parents are struggling between allowing their child more freedom and protecting him or her from behavior that could be dangerous. Dangerous behaviors include using tobacco products such as cigarettes and chewing tobacco, and indulging in lip piercing, which can result in a



cracked tooth, infection, and other issues.

During the middle and high school years, sports may become more competitive, making a mouth injury more likely. Teens should never neglect to wear a mouthguard during contact sports. A custom-made mouthguard will provide the best protection should this situation arise.

Busy teens may also tend to neglect their teeth. Daily oral care is essential because cavities don't simply stop developing when a child turns 13. In addition, lack of flossing could lead to gum disease. Teens should be sure to brush thoroughly twice daily, and floss once a day. Avoiding heavy consumption of soft and sports drinks, sugary sweets, and starchy foods like chips is also advised.