

Transforming Smiles... *Transforming Lives.*

Air-Flow Issues

If your nose is too stuffed up to let air pass through, you may find yourself breathing through your mouth. Sometimes mouth breathing becomes the norm. However, mouth breathing is far from normal and can result in a host of related issues.

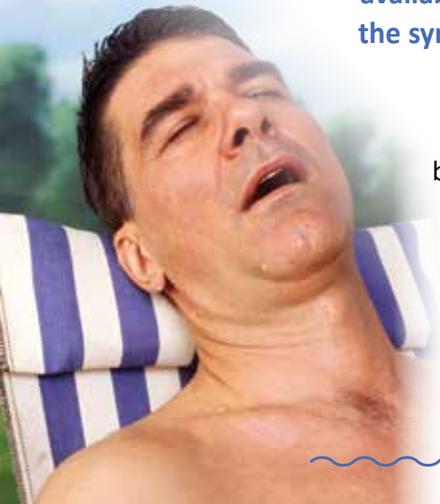
Mouth breathers may suffer from bad breath and exhibit noisy eating habits. They also may often find themselves hoarse or struggle with certain letter sounds when speaking. Bruxism is common in mouth breathers as well, which means grinding the teeth at night and experiencing resultant discomfort during the day. Mouth breathing in children that continues for an extended period may cause the child to have an elongated face and exhibit an overbite.

Those who breathe mostly through their mouths may experience a variety of health complications. For instance, mouth breathers may be more prone to cavities and periodontal disease. Snoring and sleep issues are often associated with mouth breathing, as is jaw discomfort, trouble swallowing, and upper and lower teeth that don't fit together neatly.

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Fortunately, treatments are available to help relieve the symptoms of mouth breathing. Often a referral to a specialist is helpful. A therapist can put together a regimen of exercises and techniques that can strengthen muscles or help a patient learn to breathe through his or her nose. In some situations, surgery may be necessary to remove tonsils and adenoids to open breathing passages. Sometimes temporary relief can be achieved by using nasal sprays or decongestants.

When the root cause of a mouth-breathing problem is diagnosed and treated, patients may find themselves breathing more freely and comfortably.



Cheese is actually a cavity fighter. Cheese contains a protein called casein that may help teeth in the fight against decay. Cheese also contains calcium, which is found in teeth, so eating cheese increases the amount of calcium found in the mouth and in saliva. This increase can help strengthen teeth, making it harder for bacteria to penetrate the outer surface and cause decay.

Cheese is also an excellent snack food, providing the body with not only calcium, but also protein, zinc, vitamin A, and vitamin B12.

A Food that Fights Cavities



**Summer
2018**

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

Wise Moves

By the time a child becomes a teenager, the majority of his or her permanent teeth have arrived.

The third molars, however, don't usually erupt until a young person reaches approximately age 17. Often referred to as wisdom teeth—because they arrive at an age when a child is almost an adult—these molars may erupt normally, or the mouth may not have the space to accommodate them. In other cases, the teeth may be situated in the gums in a position that doesn't allow them to protrude through the gums as they should.

When wisdom teeth are impacted, they can cause discomfort. In some cases, infections, gum disease, cysts, and even tumors may result.

Wisdom teeth that do not behave require smart decisions to prevent problems. Generally, removal is necessary to avoid discomfort and other issues.

In some cases, wisdom teeth may be removed before they erupt. This may be done if another dental procedure is necessary or to prepare the mouth for orthodontic treatment.



Sneaky Foods

You know sugar-laden foods—candies and other sweets—are bad for teeth. These foods make themselves pretty obvious. But there are other foods that are equally problematic, and some may even masquerade as healthy.

Diet soda— While most sodas are easily recognized as culprits of dental decay, diet sodas, which contain no sugar, may appear to be safe. On the contrary, diet sodas contain acids that can damage enamel—the protective outer layer of a tooth. If you must sip soda, use a straw, and drink plain water afterward to rinse the teeth.

Coffee and tea— Without added sugar, these beverages are unlikely to cause decay, but when consumed regularly over long periods of time, they can cause staining. Again, drink plenty of water to rinse the teeth between cups.

Sports drinks— When engaging in a tough workout lasting an hour or more, a sports drink can replenish fluids and electrolytes. However, sugar is often the number-one ingredient in these beverages, so a plain-water chaser can help rinse teeth while also hydrating the body.

Sticky foods— Caramel candies can clearly be a detriment to dental health because they stick to teeth. Sugar that lingers on tooth surfaces can stimulate bacteria that excrete acids which can harm teeth. Unfortunately, many dried fruits, such as those found in granola mixes, can stick to teeth as well, producing the same result. If dried fruits are among your favorite snacks, be sure to brush after eating them, and floss carefully to remove sticky debris.



BEDTIME Is for Brushing

Few of us would even consider skipping brushing our teeth during our morning routine. That fuzzy feeling in the mouth and the thought of exposing others to a mouthful of morning breath is enough to send us running for the soft-bristled toothbrush and paste.

But skipping brushing at night? Well...what if it's really late? Or you're just very tired? Or, you've had a super-busy day? There are a lot of reasons to skip brushing at bedtime, but not one of them is good enough to justify what happens when you don't bother to remove food debris and plaque before sleep.

Brushing thoroughly—meaning all the surfaces of all the teeth—with a fluoride toothpaste has many benefits. Brushing removes plaque, the film that coats your teeth when you don't brush. Brushing also removes decaying food that has attached itself to teeth during the day. Best of all, brushing disrupts the activity of bacteria on the teeth that can lead to decay and gum disease.

To make sure your teeth are as clean as possible before hitting the sack, be sure to floss to remove food and bacteria between teeth, and then brush for at least two minutes.

Dry-Mouth Solutions

Patients who are affected by dry mouth often complain of the discomfort associated with it. Their dentists, on the other hand, worry about the increased risk of decay to these patients' teeth.

Dry mouth can be caused by physical ailments, or it might be a side effect of a type of medication or treatment. Whatever the cause, the lack of saliva in the mouth means that bacteria that cause decay have more opportunity to attack.

Paying close attention to basic dental health and hygiene is essential when dry mouth is a factor. Brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste is imperative. Brushing thoroughly and flossing before bedtime is crucial to remove food debris and decrease nighttime bacterial activity. Special implements are often useful to those who find flossing difficult. Using a mouthwash that contains chlorhexidine can also help fight decay. Because of the possibility of staining, these mouthwashes should be used sparingly as recommended by your dentist.

Refreshing the mouth regularly with fluoridated water can help keep oral tissues and teeth rinsed. If you choose bottled water, look for a brand that contains fluoride and is not flavored. Flavored water may contain acids that affect enamel and contribute to decay.

Some patients find relief from chewing sugarless gum containing xylitol. The act of chewing gum causes saliva flow to increase, alleviating the feeling of dry mouth and interfering with the activities of bacteria. Sugarless candies can be used in a similar way to moisten the mouth.

In some cases, prescription medications may be used to provide relief. Dry mouth is a very individualized problem that often requires a customized solution. Talk to us about ways to defeat the discomfort associated with dry mouth, while warding off the effects of bacteria that threaten teeth.

Between Visits...

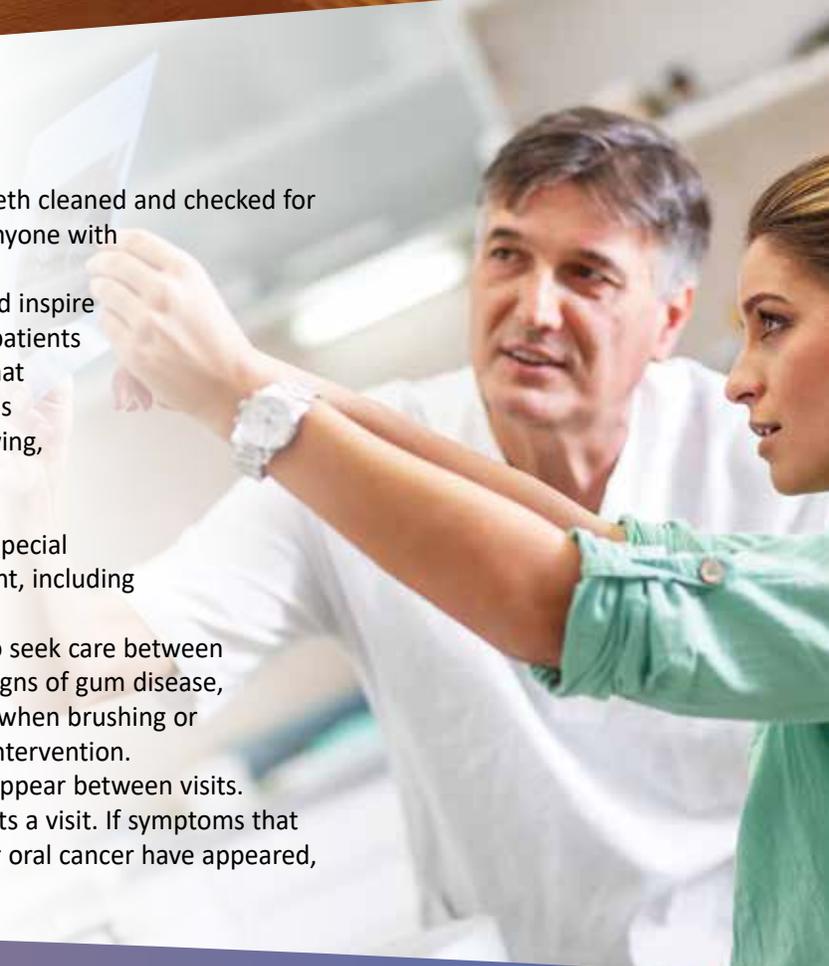
Seeing your dentist on a prescribed schedule to have your teeth cleaned and checked for problems such as decay or gum disease is standard advice for anyone with teeth.

However, there are some nonemergency concerns that should inspire you to call a dentist between those regular visits. For instance, patients who have unusual lesions, sores, or rough spots in the mouth that don't resolve after a week or so should make an appointment, as should those who are having problems eating, difficulty swallowing, or notice swelling in the mouth or the face or neck.

Patients who experience jaw discomfort when speaking or chewing—especially first thing in the morning—should make a special trip to the dentist. Patients who are undergoing cancer treatment, including radiation or chemotherapy, should also make an appointment.

Lingering dry mouth and tooth sensitivity are both reasons to seek care between regularly scheduled appointments. Chronic bad breath and/or signs of gum disease, such as swollen gums or the appearance of blood in the mouth when brushing or flossing, are also indicative of the need for professional dental intervention.

Regular dental visits are essential, but sometimes problems appear between visits. Whatever the problem, it never hurts to call and ask if it warrants a visit. If symptoms that could be related to serious issues such as periodontal disease or oral cancer have appeared, early diagnosis could save your teeth or even your life.



Floss Facts



Recent statistics on the popularity of flossing have painted a grim picture. Nearly 30 percent of adults are not totally honest with their dental professional when asked about flossing, and an even higher percentage would rather do something less than pleasant, such as sitting in traffic, than floss. But it doesn't have to be that way.

Cleaning between teeth is important because food debris can be hidden or stuck in these areas. The longer the debris remains between teeth, the more opportunity it has to stimulate bacteria that cause decay and gum disease.

If flossing isn't fun for you, you already know you aren't alone, but what you may not know is that the task needn't be so difficult. A number of flossing implements are available to make the job faster and easier. Often people who don't like to floss have difficulty getting the floss between their teeth. Others struggle with reaching between back teeth. This is where flossing tools can really help. Talk to us about ways to help make flossing faster and more efficient.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wonderful, Wonderful Water

The benefits of water for the body have been well documented. However, water is also the best choice for helping to keep teeth healthy.

First, choosing water over other beverages means skipping the empty calories found in sodas, sweetened teas, and sports drinks. Bacteria that live in the mouth love to feast on sugars these beverages contain, and acids—especially those in sports drinks—can eat away at the hard outer covering that protects teeth, making them more susceptible to decay.

Second, water acts as a cleansing agent, washing away food debris left on teeth and taking some of the “bite” out of acids by diluting them. Sipping water regularly, along with brushing twice daily and flossing, can help lower the chances of developing decay.

Third, drinking water helps lubricate the mouth, so it can work with saliva to help protect the teeth from cavities. Drinking fluoridated water can help fight decay; the benefits of fluoride in battling dental caries are well documented.

