Your Healthy Body

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 avoided with proper knowledge and prevention.

Tooth Decay
For children, cavities are a common problem that can strike at an early age. Untreated cavities can cause pain and infection, which can lead to difficulty eating, speaking, playing, and learning.

Tooth decay and 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 teeth and gums. Thorough 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. Tobacco use in any form—cigarette, pipe, or smokeless spit tobacco—increases the risk for gum disease, oral and throat cancers, and an oral yeast infection called candidiasis.
• Limit alcohol consumption. Heavy use of alcohol is a risk factor for oral and throat cancers. When used alone, both alcohol and tobacco are risk factors for oral cancers, but when used in combination the effects are even greater.
• Eat wisely. Avoid snacks with sugars and starches. Limit the number of snacks each day. A recommended five-a-day helping of fiber-rich fruits and veggies stimulates your salivary flow to aid in re-mineralization of tooth surfaces in the early stages of decay.
• Visit the dentist regularly. Checkups can detect early signs of oral health problems.
• If you have diabetes, maintain control of the condition to help prevent an increased risk of gum disease.

Celebrate National Dental Hygiene Month with better dental care! Check out cdc.gov for more information about oral health.
Seven Ways to Save

Despite everyday expenses, there are ways you can save money. Try these tips:

1. **Negotiate a lower credit card interest rate.**
   Simply call up your credit card company and ask for a better rate. If you have a credit score of 720 or higher, you may be able to get a rate of 10 percent or less. If the company refuses to lower your rate, consider canceling the card.

2. **Fill up your car with regular gas instead of premium** (unless required by your car’s manufacturer). Premium gas is about 8 percent more expensive, and most cars run just as efficiently using regular.

3. **Use coupons.** Sure, it might be tedious to hunt coupons down, but that 50 cents here and there can add up. Combine that with the fact that some grocers pair coupons with products to have them on sale that same week, and that minor annoyance just saved you double digits!

4. **Trust your instincts—not your impulses.** It may be tempting to buy that clearance-priced item, but take another walk around the store and ask yourself if you really need it. The same goes with internet shopping…save your online basket and come back online a little while later, after you have had time to decide if you really need to purchase the item.

5. **Check your tires.** It is vital to your car’s health to regularly check the tire air pressure—the recommended frequency is once a month (or before any long trip). Tires that are properly inflated may improve fuel economy by as much as 3.3 percent.

6. **Use your tap.** Believe it or not, there was a time when bottled water was not available. At nearly $2 each, this convenience can really put a dent in your wallet. If particular about your water, purchase a filter to attach to your faucet or a specially designed filtering pitcher.

Healthy & Delicious

Choose Your Snacks Wisely

Try these snack options when you are short on time or on-the-go:

- **Fruits and veggies.** These offer many nutritional benefits and lots of fiber.
- **Yogurt.** This healthy snack is full of protein and calcium.
- **Popcorn.** Available in 100-calorie individual servings, popcorn provides a bountiful amount of whole grains.
- **Applesauce.** A single portion of this treat provides a full serving of fruit. Choose the natural variety without added sugar.
- **Fruit popsicles.** Although popsicles don’t offer any nutritional value, they come in a variety of flavors and may help you avoid indulging in other sweets.
- **String cheese.** Opt for an individually wrapped variety for protein and calcium at less than 100 calories per serving.
- **Nuts and seeds.** These are a good source of protein, healthy fats, fiber, vitamins, and minerals.
- **Avocados.** Containing over 20 vitamins and minerals, this unique fruit is versatile and delicious.