

# Smiles All Around

6 essential steps for your dental routine



- 1 Gather your tools.**  
Make sure you have fluoride toothpaste, dental floss and a toothbrush with soft, rounded bristles.
- 2 Set a schedule.**  
Brush at least twice a day, and floss at least once. When possible, brush immediately after eating sweet or starchy foods, but wait half an hour after eating acidic foods to avoid damaging your softened enamel.
- 3 Be thorough.**  
Brush for at least two minutes each session, angling your toothbrush at 45 degrees and using short, circular strokes. Apply just enough pressure to feel the bristles without squishing them. When you're done, brush your tongue to remove bacteria.

- 4 Don't forget to floss.**  
Floss removes plaque from between teeth and below the gumline. Don't worry if your gums feel tender or bleed at first. By flossing, you're fighting the source of the problem: the bacteria causing your sensitive gums.
- 5 Rinse to refresh.**  
After brushing and flossing, vigorously rinse your mouth with mouthwash or water to remove any loosened plaque and food particles.
- 6 Go pro.**  
Regular dental cleanings are an important part of maintaining your oral and overall health. Call your dentist for an appointment today.

Oral health is essential at every stage of life. Turn the page to learn more.



# Help your teeth last a lifetime

## Protect your teeth

- **Eat wisely.** Consider your teeth when choosing meals and snacks. Eat a balanced diet including enamel-strengthening calcium and vitamins A and C. Avoid sugary treats and drinks — but if you do indulge, remember to brush afterwards.
- **Flourish with fluoride.** Fluoride is a cost-effective cavity fighter. Always choose fluoride toothpaste, and if your tap water isn't fluoridated (or if you drink bottled or filtered water), ask your dentist about supplemental tablets, drops, lozenges or professionally applied treatments.<sup>2</sup>
- **Say “no” to tobacco.** Tobacco breaks down gum tissue, causing infection and tooth loss. If you're a heavy smoker, you're over twice as likely to lose teeth, and whether you chew or smoke tobacco, you're at higher risk for oral, pharyngeal, head and neck cancers.<sup>1</sup>

## Tips for kids

- **Keep baby teeth clean.** Clean your kids' teeth and gums with a soft, damp cloth as soon as the first tooth is visible (around 6 months). If your baby sleeps with a bottle, fill it only with water.
- **Build strong bones early.** Swap out candy and sugary treats for calcium-rich snacks like yogurt and cheese.

- **Defend the mouth.** If your child plays sports, invest in a mouthguard from your sports store or dentist.<sup>2</sup>
- **Stay safe with sealants.** Ask your dentist to apply sealants to your child's molars. These plastic coatings seal off teeth from decay and are covered under most Delta Dental plans.<sup>2</sup>

## Tips for seniors

- **Visit the dentist regularly.** Preventive care is a must at any age, and seniors are especially at risk for untreated dental problems. Family members can help you schedule regular dental visits if you are homebound or live in a nursing home.
- **Know your medications.** Some drugs adversely interact with dental anesthesia. Keep your dentist informed about any health changes, especially new medications.
- **Keep dentures clean.** Plaque sticks to dentures as well as natural teeth. Talk to your dentist about the best way to keep your dentures clean to avoid discomfort, infection and bone loss.



Visit [mysmileway.com](https://mysmileway.com) — a one-stop-shop for oral health-related tools and tips, including interactive quizzes, a risk assessment tool and a subscription to *Grin!*, our free oral wellness e-magazine.

<sup>1</sup> Warnakulasuriya S, Dietrich T, Bornstein MM, et al. Oral health risks of tobacco use and effects of cessation. *Int Dent J.* 2010;60(1):7-30.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to your plan details for more information about your coverage.