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A Guide to a Healthy Smile
How-To Tips for Taking Care of Your Teeth and Gums

Keeping your teeth and gums healthy is an important part of preventing tooth decay and gum disease. It also helps to keep your smile looking nice. Here are some tips on taking good care, of your teeth from the American Dental Association.

- Brush your teeth twice a day using a soft-bristled toothbrush. Look for the right size to allow you to reach all areas easily

- When brushing, hold the brush at a 45-degree angle against the gums and make sure to cover all of your teeth's outer surfaces, inner surfaces and chewing surfaces

- Replace your toothbrush every three or four months.

- Brush your tongue to remove bacteria and freshen breath

- Use a toothpaste that contains fluoride

- Clean between the teeth once daily using floss. Gently use the floss to rub between the teeth - never snap the floss into the gums - and don't forget the back sides of the teeth in the back of your mouth. For those who have difficulty handling dental floss, dental picks or special brushes will also work

- Eat a healthy diet and visit your dentist regularly

1. Wind 18" of floss around middle fingers of each hand. Pinch floss between thumbs and index fingers, leaving 1" - 2" length in between. Use thumbs to direct floss between upper teeth.

2. Keep a 1" - 2" length of floss taut between fingers. Use index fingers to guide floss between contacts of the lower teeth.

3. Gently guide floss between the teeth by using a zig-zag motion. DO NOT SNAP FLOSS BETWEEN YOUR TEETH. Contour floss around the side of the tooth.

4. Slide floss up and down against the tooth surface and under the gumline. Floss each tooth thoroughly with a clean section of floss.

0611-HE00102