



## Good oral care for adults

Oral diseases, such as tooth decay and gum disease, are widespread and preventable. Through proper self-care, regular dental check-ups and managing risk factors, good oral health and general health can be secured.

### Do you practice good oral care?

See how many items in the checklist you can tick and use the tips provided to act on mouth health.

Do you brush your teeth twice a day?

Brush your teeth for two minutes twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste to help reduce your risk of tooth decay and gum disease. Brush in a circular motion with either a manual or electric toothbrush.

Do you know whether you should rinse your mouth after brushing your teeth?

Don't rinse your mouth with water straight after brushing, spit out any excess toothpaste instead. This avoids the concentrated fluoride in the remaining toothpaste from being washed away or diluted and reinforces its preventive effects.

Do you know what the concentration of fluoride in your toothpaste should be?

Brush your teeth using a toothpaste containing 1000–1500 parts per million [ppm] fluoride. Check the packaging before buying your toothpaste to ensure it contains the correct amount.

Do you know how you can protect your mouth on-the-go when toothbrushing may not be possible?

Rinse with a fluoride mouthwash or chew sugarfree gum after meals and snacks when brushing isn't possible. Using a mouthwash that contains fluoride can help prevent tooth decay.

Do you know how much toothpaste you should be using??

Use a pea-size amount of toothpaste to keep your teeth and mouth healthy.

Do you clean between your teeth?

Ask your dentist how to clean between your teeth using floss or other interdental cleaners. Regular cleaning between teeth helps to dislodge food and may also reduce gum disease and bad breath by removing plaque that forms along the gum line.

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Do you eat a healthy diet, with limited snacking of foods and drinks high in sugar?

Limit your intake of sugars to approximately 6 teaspoons daily. Avoid consuming excessive amounts of sugar from snacks, processed food and soft drinks to help prevent dental caries (tooth decay) and other oral diseases.

Do you know that tobacco and alcohol are bad for your mouth?

Don't use tobacco and limit your alcohol consumption. Tobacco and alcohol put your mouth at an increased risk for gum disease and oral cancer. Tobacco can also cause teeth staining, bad breath, premature tooth loss, and loss of taste and smell. Excessive alcohol drinking can lead to injury, often to the mouth and teeth, and can cause dental caries due to the acidity and high sugar content of many alcoholic drinks.

Do you know how to protect your teeth and mouth during contact sports?

Wear a professionally-made mouthguard whenever you play a sport that involves physical contact, moving objects or regular falls and blows. A mouthguard is a rubber-like cover which fits exactly over the teeth and gums, cushioning and protecting them from fracture, displacement or loss. Speak to your dentist or primary healthcare provider for guidance on whether you need a mouthguard depending on the sport you play.

Do you have a regular dental check-up?

Visit your dentist or primary healthcare provider regularly for check-ups and cleanings. They can also advise on how regularly you need to book an appointment, depending on your specific needs. Just like other major diseases, prevention, early detection and treatment are key to ensuring the best outcomes and reducing the risk for oral diseases and associated health complications.

**SCORE**

*Count the number of boxes you ticked*

**/10**

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It's never too early or too late to start looking after your oral health. Act on mouth health by putting into practice the tips provided to protect your mouth and body.

**Learn more at [lifeeducation.org.au](http://lifeeducation.org.au)**

**Disclaimer**

Sugar in this document refers to free sugars that are added to foods and drinks by the manufacturer, cook, or consumer, and sugars naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juice and fruit juice concentrates. It does not refer to sugar that is naturally present in fruits, vegetables and milk. These tips are based on FDI global recommendations and your national guidelines may differ, so please consult with your dentist/primary healthcare provider or National Dental Association to ensure they comply with local recommendations.