



Oral Health Tips for Teens Selfie-Ready



Why Is Your Oral Health Important?

As a teenager, you may be starting to make some of your own decisions about things that matter most to you. You may choose your own clothes, music and friends. You also may be ready to make decisions about your body and health.

Making healthy choices now about your teeth and gums is a great place to start. A healthy smile can boost your confidence and help you feel good about yourself.

If you don't look after your mouth, teeth and gums the right way, you could have:

- Bad Breath
- Stained Teeth
- Cavities
- Pain
- Bleeding or Swollen Gums
- Broken or Chipped Teeth



Taking Care of Your Smile

- Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush your tongue for fresher breath.
- Floss daily (cleaning between your teeth once a day).
- Rinse and clean any braces or retainer.
- See your dentist for cleanings and check-ups twice a year.



Play Sports? Protect Your Teeth While You Play

A mouthguard will help protect you against broken and damaged teeth, and even a broken or dislocated jaw. Ask your school if they provide them or ask your dentist if you need a professionally fitted mouthguard.



Healthy Teeth Eating Tips

- Limit sugary foods (like candy or frozen desserts), and chips and fries which have unhealthy fat and salt.
- Grab a piece of fruit or sliced veggies for a quick snack.
- Drink fat-free or low-fat milk and avoid sugary or acidic drinks. Soda, energy drinks, sweet tea and some juices have added sugars.
- Many teens need more calcium (found in many dairy products) and Vitamin D (found in orange juice, oranges, tuna and fat-free or low-fat milk).



What Age Do Wisdom Teeth Come In?

Wisdom teeth, also known as third molars, are the last of the permanent teeth to come in. They often will erupt for most between the ages of 17 and 21. Some teens have no wisdom teeth at all, or they just never fully erupt. Some may have problems that include pain, swollen gums and pressure against the jaw or other teeth.

Oral Jewelry/Piercings



If you're thinking about getting a piercing in or around your mouth, make sure you understand the risks. Talk with your dentist.

Some risks include:

- Chipped teeth
- Infection
- Swelling
- Damaged gums
- Nerve damage
- Disease, if not done with sterilized instruments

Teens are covered with CareSource dental benefits. Contact your Dental Provider today to schedule an appointment or call Member Services. The number is on the back of your ID card if you have any questions.

Smoking, Vaping, Alcohol or Drug Misuse and Oral Health

Smoking, chewing and vaping tobacco can cause:

- Tooth staining
- Gum disease
- Tooth loss
- Bad breath
- Mouth cancer and several other cancers

Smoking cannabis (marijuana) can have the same effects as smoking tobacco.

- Alcoholic drinks can cause mouth cancer. If you smoke and drink, you are more at risk. Alcohol can also increase the risk of tooth decay and erosion (break down of the tooth structure). Some alcoholic drinks have a lot of sugar in them, and some mixed drinks may contain acids. They can cause decay or dental erosion if you drink them often and in large amounts.
- Get the facts at www.store.samhsa.gov. Some teens may be prescribed opioids for wisdom teeth removal, but opioids can be addictive and dangerous. Make sure to only use medication that has been prescribed to YOU and never share any medications. Opioids can kill you if misused and abused.
- Some illegal drugs can cause dry mouth and increase the risk of erosion, decay, gum disease and bad breath. Drugs can also cause you to grind your teeth, which can cause headaches and other problems. Many drugs can cause a craving for sugar, such as sweets and fizzy drinks, which can cause tooth decay.
- Talk to your parents, your doctor/dentist, a counselor, teacher or another adult you trust. You can also call the CareSource24® Nurse Advice Line if you have questions. The number is on the back of your member ID card.

