

Brush Up on Dental Hygiene

Brushing and flossing work hand in hand to keep your teeth at their best. By brushing and flossing daily, you can remove the sticky plaque that causes tooth decay, control bad breath, and maintain a bright, polished smile.

Here are some tips on how to brush well:

- Brush at least twice a day, preferably after each meal or snack.
- Choose a toothbrush with soft, rounded bristles that won't scratch your teeth. Talk to your dentist about the best choice for you.
- Apply a pea-sized dab of toothpaste on the top half of your toothbrush.
- Hold your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle, so the bristles touch both your teeth and your gumline.
- Brush teeth back and forth with a gentle rolling motion.
- Brush two to three teeth at a time. Continue this method on all of your teeth.
- Clean the outside, inside, and biting surface of your teeth.
- Tilt your brush vertically behind your front teeth, and brush up and down with the front of your brush.
- Brush your tongue from back to front to remove the bacteria that can cause bad breath.

Here are some tips on flossing:

- Floss at least once a day for two to three minutes.
- Tear off an 18-inch piece of floss, and wrap it around your middle fingers. Hold a one- to two-inch section between your thumbs and index fingers.
- Use your thumbs to guide the floss between your upper teeth, and use your index fingers to guide it between your lower teeth.
- Slide the floss up and down around the sides of each tooth. Be sure to reach below the gumline.
- Use a gentle zigzag motion as you floss, and never snap, jerk, or rub the floss side to side as if you were shining a shoe.
- Switch to a clean section of floss when it becomes dirty or frayed.

Sources: *The Academy of General Dentistry, www.agd.org and the American Dental Hygienists Association, www.adha.org*



Buying OTC Medicines

The best way to become better informed about over-the-counter (OTC) medicines – for young and old alike – is to read and understand the information on OTC medicine labels. Next to the medicine itself, label comprehension is the most important part of self-care with OTC medicines.

Here are some tips:

- Always read the label carefully. Use enough light and put on your glasses or contact lenses if needed.
- Check the tamper-evident features before you buy the product or use it.
- Know that more doesn't mean better. You should never misuse OTC medicines by taking them longer or in higher doses than the label recommends. Symptoms that persist are a clear signal it's time to see a doctor.
- Remember, if you read the label and still have questions, talk to a doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

Source: *U.S. Food and Drug Administration, www.fda.gov*



Coping with the Side Effects of Cancer Treatment

While chemotherapy and other cancer treatment methods can save your life, they can also cause side effects that can be uncomfortable and often seem unbearable at times.

Here are a few ways you can help cope with some of the side effects of cancer treatment:

- Plan your day so that you have time to rest. Save your energy for the most important activities to you.

- Eat and drink slowly to help diminish nausea. Drink water frequently before or after meals. Chew your food well for easier digestion. Avoid sweet, fatty, or fried foods.
- If you have pain – mouth sores, headaches, muscle pains, stomach pains, etc. – talk to your doctor and take any pain medicines you're given.
- Obtain a wig, hairpiece, hats, or head coverings before you lose any hair. Have your hair cut shorter so it's less obvious if you begin losing your hair.
- Wash your hands often and stay away from people who are sick.
- To avoid skin dryness, apply moisturizer.

For more information, visit the National Cancer Institute at <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/chemotherapy-and-you/page4>.



Taking Care of Your Teeth

- ▲ Limit snacking between meals.
- ▲ Rinse with water after drinking a soft drink or juice drinks.
- ▲ Brush and floss your teeth at least twice daily, ideally after each meal.
- ▲ Have regular checkups and cleanings to catch dental problems in their early stages.
- ▲ If you chew gum, select sugar-free options.