

## Maintaining A Healthy Mouth

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Maintaining a healthy mouth is no longer just about brushing your teeth. In the last 10 years dentistry has been revolutionized. The materials now are so much more advanced. Today's dental hygiene has mushroomed with products and procedures to clean, whiten and straighten teeth, prevent gum disease and freshen breath. Besides following the basic advice—brush, floss and get a professional cleaning at least twice a year—we're faced with everything from invisible braces and fillings to high-wattage at-home whiteners.

Floss at least once a day, it's the only way to remove the bacteria (in the form of plaque) that accumulates between teeth and leads to bad breath, yellowing and tooth decay. Flossing also stops gum disease (gingivitis), which can weaken the heart. The same bacteria that collect between your teeth get into the bloodstream and produce plaque in blood vessels. Check your gums: Healthy ones are pink and tight against the teeth; diseased gums are red, loose and swollen.

Brush at least twice a day. If you use a manual toothbrush choose a small, soft head and brush gently for at least two minutes. Brushing too hard can eventually weaken enamel and accelerate gum recession. Dentists recommend electric toothbrushes because the rotary movement of the heads softly scrubs teeth. For more information on Tooth Brush Care [Click Here](#).

Scrape your tongue. There are 300 kinds of bacteria on the tongue and they are responsible for 90 percent of bad breath. Brushing your teeth, then following with a tongue scraper can prevent bad breath and keeps colds from spreading. Tongue scraping restricts the amount of bacteria going up into the nasal passages.

Chew sugarless gum. It helps if you can't brush after every meal. It increases the flow of saliva, which washes away a lot of bacteria.

### QUESTIONS

Which whitening toothpastes work best?

Teeth whitening toothpastes don't stay on teeth long enough to make a major change, they're for maintenance. Pastes with a gritty texture can erode tooth enamel, so avoid ones that contain salt, pumice, silica and mica.

### FACTS

32% of Americans cite bad breath as the least attractive trait of their co-workers.

38.5% Total days an average American spends brushing teeth over lifetime.

73% of Americans would rather go grocery shopping than floss.