

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR DENTAL EXAM

Regular dental checkups are important for the health of your teeth. The dentist can detect problems early, when they are easier to treat. He or she can also offer tips for caring for your mouth. Here's what else you can expect:

- Your dentist will review your overall oral health, looking for plaque and tartar buildups.
- Your mouth will be checked for signs of tooth decay, root decay and gum disease. These are easier to treat when caught early.
- The dentist will clean your teeth and remove any stains or tartar deposits.
- Your bite and jaw will be checked for an overbite or underbite.
- Dental X-rays may be done to check for deeper disease or decay.

Do you get nervous at your dentist's office? Let your dentist know so he or she can help ease your concerns.

Learn more about taking care of your teeth at nyc.gov/health. If you're a MetroPlus member and need help finding dentist, call **MetroPlus Health Plan** at **1.800.303.9626**.



METROPLUS.ORG 1.855.809.4073
160 Water Street, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10038



For information about
MetroPlus Health Plan call
1.800.475.METRO.

MetroPlus.org

facebook.com/MetroPlusHealth

twitter.com/MetroPlusHealth

youtube.com/HHCMetroPlusHealth

TAKING CARE OF YOUR TEETH



GOOD DENTAL
CARE IS
IMPORTANT



MetroPlus.org

Why is it important to take care of my teeth?

Good dental care can prevent cavities, gum disease, bad breath and even tooth loss. The health of your teeth and gums affects your entire body's health. Did you know that gum disease may increase your risk of heart disease?

WHAT IS PLAQUE?

Plaque is a mixture of bacteria, protein and food. It forms in your mouth and gets stuck in your teeth. It is important to remove plaque before it hardens into tartar. Tartar can cause serious damage to your teeth and gums.

Tips for Healthy Teeth

Brushing and flossing are important, but they are not all you can do. Lifestyle choices can also help keep your teeth strong and your smile bright.

1 DO NOT SMOKE.

If you do smoke, quit. Cigarettes and other tobacco products stain your teeth. They also increase the risk of gum disease and oral cancer.

2 TAKE IN CALCIUM.

Not getting enough calcium can increase your risk of gum disease and tooth decay. Foods that are rich in calcium include cheese, milk, broccoli, okra and tofu.

3 AVOID SUGARY FOODS.

That includes sodas, fruit drinks and sticky candies. If you do eat sugary foods, brush your teeth after.

4 USE FLUORIDE, BUT NOT TOO MUCH.

Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel and prevents decay. Most tap water in New York is fluoridated. Fluoride is also found in toothpastes and mouthwashes. Be careful, though: Too much fluoride can stain your teeth.

5 SEE YOUR DENTIST.

Most adults should have a dental checkup once a year.

THE SIGNS OF GUM DISEASE

Gum disease is an infection of your gums. It is caused by poor oral hygiene. Bad habits, like smoking, can also cause gum disease. If untreated, it can cause tooth loss.

There are two types of gum disease. Gingivitis is the less severe type, and usually precedes periodontitis. Call your dentist if you notice these signs of gum disease:

- Your gums bleed when you brush or floss your teeth.
- Your gums are red, swollen or tender.
- You have constant bad breath, or a bad taste in your mouth.
- Your gums are receding.
- Your teeth are loose or shifting.
- There are changes in the way your teeth fit together when you bite down.



HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR TEETH

BRUSH TWICE A DAY	FLOSS ONCE A DAY
Hold your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle against your gums.	Pinch the floss between your thumb and index fingers.
Gently move your brush back and forth in short strokes. Do not press too hard against your gums.	Carefully slide the floss between your teeth. Use a gentle rubbing motion.
Brush your tongue to kill bacteria and freshen your breath.	Carefully slide it into the space between your tooth and your gum, where a toothbrush cannot reach.
Use the tip of your brush to clean the inside surface of your front teeth.	Hold the floss tightly against the side of your tooth. Gently rub the tooth in an up-and-down motion.
Brush the front, back and chewing surface of all your teeth.	Repeat for all teeth.