

Oral health



Oral health is surprisingly important for overall health. To be healthy means you don't have any mouth or facial pain, oral or throat cancer, oral sores, cleft lip or palate, gum disease, tooth decay, tooth loss, or any other diseases that affect the mouth, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). September is National Oral Health Month and World Oral Health Day is on the 12th.

Oral health is essential to overall health and to quality of life, and most diseases and disorders that affect the oral cavity can be avoided through good oral hygiene, healthy diet, avoiding using tobacco products, and avoiding harmful drinking. WHO is particularly concerned about the link between sugar consumption and oral health because sugar creates acid in the mouth which attacks the teeth.

Luckily, a diet that is good for your teeth is also good for your overall health.

Diet and oral health

The link between diet (what you eat) and your overall health is clear: the healthier and more balanced your diet, the more healthy you are as a whole. And this is true for your teeth as well. So what should you be eating to ensure you keep your teeth clean?

- **Drink enough water.** Studies have shown that drinking a glass of plain water (not carbonated or flavoured) after eating has enormous benefits for your teeth. It washes away some of the food that gets stuck between your teeth and neutralises the acid that sugars cause in

your mouth.

- **Chew sugar-free gum.** In addition to helping to curb your appetite, sugar-free gum helps you to produce more saliva which helps to clean your teeth after eating.
- **Munch on whole foods.** Although it's convenient and often tasty to sip a smoothie, crunching down on a carrot, apple, pear, or other hard fruits and vegetables can help keep your teeth clean and your roots strong.
- **Avoid sugar.** Sugar has been shown to cause various conditions including increasing the chance of cavities. Reduce the amount of sugar you eat, especially from hard sweets and cold drinks, to cut your risk of dental disease.

Furthermore, avoid using your teeth as a tool. Your teeth are more delicate than they seem, so using them as a multitool isn't good for them and you could chip a tooth.

Finally, be sure to brush your teeth morning and night and to floss once a day. Visit your dentist for a check-up every six months to make sure you keep your mouth healthy.