



# ORAL HEALTH IMPACTS OVERALL HEALTH

The health of your mouth, teeth and gums can affect your general health.

Without proper oral care, the bacteria in your mouth can reach levels that may lead to infections, such as tooth decay and gum disease. Studies suggest that these bacteria and the inflammation they cause can impact your overall health. The reverse can also be true – some health conditions and medications can affect your oral health.

## Which conditions are linked to oral health?\*

Your oral health might contribute to various conditions, including:

- › Endocarditis – an infection of the inner lining of your heart chambers or valves
- › Cardiovascular disease
- › Pregnancy and birth complications
- › Pneumonia

Some conditions also might affect your oral health, including:

- › Diabetes
- › HIV/AIDS
- › Osteoporosis
- › Alzheimer's disease
- › Eating disorders
- › Rheumatoid arthritis
- › Certain cancers

## How can I protect my oral health?

**Be sure to schedule regular dental checkups and cleanings.** Preventive care can help spot issues early on, when treatment is likely to be simpler and more affordable.\*\*

Take good care of your mouth every day.

- › Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- › Floss daily.
- › Use mouthwash after brushing and flossing.
- › Eat a healthy diet and limit foods with added sugars.
- › Replace your toothbrush every three months, or as soon as the bristles look worn.
- › Avoid tobacco use.

**Together, all the way.®**



\*Mayo Clinic, "Oral health: A window to your overall health," accessed August 13, 2019. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/dental/art-20047475>

\*\*Mouth Healthy/American Dental Association, "Your Top 9 Questions About Going to the Dentist – Answered," accessed June 12, 2019. <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/dental-care-concerns/questions-about-going-to-the-dentist>

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