



SMILE THROUGH YOUR GOLDEN YEARS

Keep your teeth and gums healthy.

Today's older adults are keeping their natural teeth longer. It's all thanks to scientific developments and the dental industry's emphasis on prevention. Here are some tips and information to help you keep your teeth and gums healthy.

Dental challenges as you grow older but wiser.*

Seniors can face unique dental challenges, such as:

- › Higher chance to have decay around older fillings, and decay of the tooth root itself.
- › Plaque builds up faster and in greater amounts.
- › Reduced dexterity and mobility may make daily oral hygiene habits more difficult.
- › Medical or mental conditions may present additional challenges to maintaining or receiving regular care.
- › Vision or hearing loss may reduce a patient's ability to cope with stress or communicate clearly.
- › Higher chance of gum disease

Good nutrition can keep your body and your teeth strong.**

Good nutrition is important for everyone, but many older adults don't eat balanced diets, which can affect their teeth. Some people avoid certain foods because they have trouble chewing or swallowing due to painful teeth, ill-fitting dentures, dry mouth or changes in facial muscles. Others find their sense of taste has changed, sometimes due to disease or certain medications. The key is to choose healthy foods you can eat and enjoy.

Dry mouth may not be a normal consequence of aging.*

Side effects from medications are the most common cause of dry mouth, but it may also be the first sign of a health problem or disease. Talk with your dentist if you have dry mouth.

Dental dos and don'ts:*

- › Don't skip routine dental care. Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams.
- › Brush your teeth at least twice a day.
- › Clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner.
- › Replace your toothbrush every three or four months or sooner if the bristles become frayed. A worn toothbrush will not do a good job of cleaning your teeth.
- › Don't use tobacco products. Smoking or chewing tobacco increases the risk of cavities, gum disease, and oral cancer.
- › Watch your diet. Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks.

Together, all the way.®





Together, you and your dentist can keep your teeth happy at every age.

Good oral hygiene and regular dental care are important whatever your age. Even if you no longer have your natural teeth, you should see your dentist regularly. The dentist will check for any problem with the gum ridges, the tongue and the joints of the jaw. They will also screen for oral cancer.*



* American Dental Association. Aging and Dental Health. January 2018 <<http://www.ada.org/en/member-center/oral-health-topics/aging-and-dental-health>>

** Cigna Healthwise. Dental Care for Older Adults. May 2017. <<http://www.cigna.com/healthwellness/hw/medical-topics/dental-care-for-older-adults-ug3147#ug3147-sec>>

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