

# HealthyBy Choice

...One Day at a Time

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## DENTAL HYGIENE AWARENESS MONTH

There are four routines that can help people maintain healthy smiles:

- BRUSH
- FLOSS
- RINSE
- CHEW

The ADA recommends brushing your teeth twice a day, for two minutes, with a soft-bristled brush. The size and shape of the brush should fit the mouth allowing you to reach all areas easily

The proper brushing technique is to:

- Place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gums.
- Gently move the brush back and forth in short (tooth-wide) strokes.
- Brush the outer surfaces, the inner surfaces and the chewing surfaces of the teeth.
- To clean the inside surfaces of the front teeth, tilt the brush vertically and make several up-and-down strokes.
- Brush your tongue to remove bacteria and keep your breath fresh.

The ADA recommends cleaning between your teeth once a day to remove plaque that is not removed by brushing. Plaque can eventually harden into calculus or tartar.

Because teeth alone account for less than half of the mouth, rinsing can help eliminate biofilm and bacteria that brushing and flossing cannot. Rinsing often, along with brushing and flossing, may help reduce the chance of dental decay and infection. However, avoid rinses that have alcohol in them.



Lastly, clinical studies have shown that chewing sugarless gum for 20 minutes following meals can help prevent tooth decay. The chewing of sugarless gum increases the flow of saliva, which washes away food and other debris, neutralizes acids produced by bacteria in the mouth and provides disease-fighting substances throughout the mouth.



## COMMON CONDITIONS DURING ADULTHOOD

As we get older, dental care for adults is crucial. Here are a few of the conditions to be aware of:

**Gum disease** – if your home care routine of brushing and flossing has slipped and you have skipped your regular dental cleanings, bacterial plaque and tartar can build up on your teeth. The plaque and tartar, if left untreated, may eventually cause irreparable damage to your jawbone and support structures, and could lead to tooth loss.

**Oral cancer** – according to the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, men over the age of 40 have the greatest risk for oral cancer. About approximately 43,000 people will be diagnosed with cancer of the mouth, tongue or throat area, and the ACS estimates that about 7,000 people will die from these cancers. The use of tobacco products and alcohol increases the risk of oral cancer. Most oral cancers are first diagnosed by the dentist during a routine checkup.

**Dental fillings break down** – fillings have a life expectancy of eight to 10 years. However, they can last 20 years or longer. When the fillings in your mouth start to break down, food and bacteria can get underneath them and can cause decay deep in the tooth.



Better Teeth...Better Health!



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## Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Domestic violence encompasses a spectrum of behaviors that abusers use to control victims. If you or a friend experience these behaviors from a partner, remember: **it is not your fault** and there are advocates waiting to help. The following list includes warning signs that someone may be abusive.

- Wants to move too quickly into the relationship.
- Early in the relationship flatters you constantly, and seems "too good to be true."
- Wants you all to him- or herself; insists that you stop spending time with your friends or family.
- Insists that you stop participating in hobbies or activities, quit school, or quit your job.
- Does not honor your boundaries.
- Is excessively jealous and accuses you of being unfaithful.
- Wants to know where you are all of the time and frequently calls, emails, and texts you throughout the day.
- Criticizes or puts you down; says you are crazy, stupid, and/or fat/unattractive, or that no one else would ever want or love you.
- Takes no responsibility for his or her behavior and blames others.
- Has a history of abusing others.
- Blames the entire failure of previous relationships on his or her former partner; for example, "My ex was totally crazy."
- Takes your money or runs up your credit card debt.
- Rages out of control with you but can maintain composure around others.

Abuse is never the fault of the victim and it can be hard for many reasons, including safety, to end the relationship. If you experience these "warning signs", you can confide in a friend or reach out for support from a domestic violence advocate. If you believe a friend or relative is being abused, offer your non-judgmental support and help.

If you are in an abusive relationship, it is important to get support. Someone who batters is usually very good at getting their partner isolated away from their family and friends. As a result, victims often begin to feel ashamed and alone and believe that no one would understand. Many survivors have even described feeling as if they didn't even know who they were anymore. This makes it even more difficult to survive the abuse, to sort through the feelings and to make decisions that will be best for you and your children.

If you find that you don't have anyone to talk to, consider calling the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** or a domestic violence program in your area. Hotline operators are specially trained in domestic violence and are available 24 hours a day to provide resources, help with options to stay safe or just to listen.

Support groups are another option to consider. Besides offering shelter, many domestic violence programs also offer support groups. These groups offer a safe place to talk about your feelings and experiences in an atmosphere free of judgment. It's also an opportunity to meet and talk with other people who have had similar experiences.



*Recognize it. Report it. Prevent it.*

