

Keys to Good Oral Health

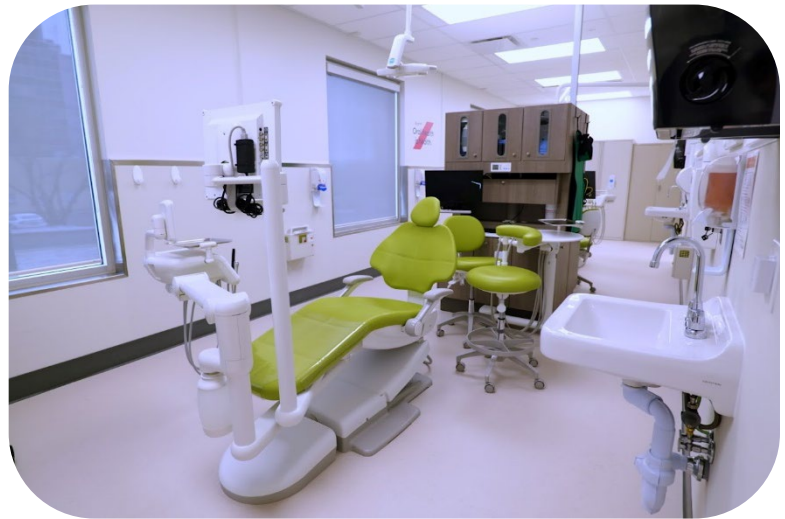
A person's smile has an important link to overall well-being and health. Our mouths and teeth aren't just for chewing. Oral health impacts our speech, the enjoyment of food and the way we express feelings and emotions. Good oral health gives us confidence to live, work and play.

Did you know? April is Oral Health Month in Canada. In other words, there's no better time to shine a light on different ways to prevent oral diseases. Let's unlock our healthiest smiles!

Oral Health and You

Good oral health means more than having a nice smile! Your mouth can tell you a lot about the health of your body.

Oral health and general health have a two-way relationship. Oral diseases can cause poor general health, which can lead to oral health problems. For example, diabetes increases the risk of gum disease and gum disease can make diabetes harder to manage.



Preventing Common Dental Problems

Tooth decay, gum disease, and oral cancer are chronic oral diseases. A chronic disease is a health condition that lasts a long time and can affect people of all ages. Most chronic diseases can be prevented, but they are still the leading cause of poor health, including poor oral health.

The most common dental problem is tooth decay (cavities). Bacteria in the mouth mix with sugars from foods and drinks to make acids which weaken the teeth causing tooth decay. But it is preventable. Through good oral habits and consistency, you can ensure your beautiful smile lasts a lifetime.

Here are some tips on how to protect against tooth decay and other oral health problems:

- Brush your teeth and floss at least two times a day

- Eat a healthy diet and limit sugary food and drinks
- Visit your dentist for regular checkups or if oral health problem starts
- Avoid tobacco use

Taking good care of your teeth and gums each day is an important way to prevent tooth decay and gum disease. Finding and treating dental problems early leads to better oral health. Good oral health lowers the risks linked to diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases.



Fluoride can also protect against tooth decay in both children and adults. Getting an early start using fluoride has life-long benefits.

Adults have less tooth decay if they start using fluoride when they're children. [Fluoride](#) is an important mineral that keeps teeth healthy and for decades it has been used to prevent tooth decay. It's found naturally in soil, air, and water. Fluoride strengthens the tooth's outer surface (enamel) and repairs damage caused by tooth decay acids. Fluoride is available in different forms such as:

- in some communities' tap water;
- oral care products such as toothpaste and mouth rinse; and
- in fluoride varnish or gel applied by dental health professionals.

For more information about fluoride visit [10 Fluoride Facts](#).

Did you know? Your child may be eligible for free fluoride varnish services. AHS offers a fluoride varnish program for [children in preschool](#) and [school-aged children](#).

Visit ahs.ca/oralhealth to learn more.

Wellness Articles

Alberta Health Services encourages all Albertans to live a healthy life. These weekly Wellness Articles are created by a team of healthcare professionals from AHS in collaboration with provincial healthcare experts in Alberta and content from myhealth.alberta.ca. Our experts ensure this information is factual, current, and written for Albertans.

From stress-relief strategies to finding balance within your life, these Wellness Articles cover a variety of different topics designed to inspire and educate Albertans on creating a positive and healthy lifestyle.

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