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Help Your Children Brush Up on Healthy Teeth

1. **Start cleaning teeth early.** As soon as the first tooth appears, begin cleaning by wiping with a clean, damp cloth every day. When more teeth come in, switch to a small, soft toothbrush. Begin using toothpaste with fluoride when the child is 2 years old. Use toothpaste with fluoride earlier if your child's doctor or dentist recommends it.
2. **Use the right amount of fluoride toothpaste.** Fluoride is important for fighting cavities. But if children younger than 6 years old swallow too much fluoride, their permanent teeth may have white spots. To keep this from happening, use only a small amount of toothpaste (about the size of a pea). Teach your child to spit out the toothpaste and to rinse well after brushing.
3. **Supervise brushing.** Brush your child's teeth twice a day until your child has the skill to handle the toothbrush alone. Then continue to closely watch brushing to make sure the child is doing a thorough job and using only a small amount of toothpaste.
4. **Talk to your child's doctor or dentist.** Check with the doctor or dentist about your child's specific fluoride needs. After age 2, most children get the right amount of fluoride to help prevent cavities if they drink water that contains fluoride and brush their teeth with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste twice a day.

Parents of children older than 6 months should ask about the need for a fluoride supplement if drinking water does not have enough fluoride.

Do not let a child younger than 6 years old use a fluoride mouth rinse unless the child's doctor or dentist recommends it.

Source: Centers for Disease Control. www.cdc.gov. Accessed July 18, 2014.



Oral Health — Preventing Cavities, Gum Disease, Tooth Loss, and Oral Cancers

Oral health is often taken for granted, but it is an essential part of our everyday lives. Good oral health enhances our ability to speak, smile, smell, taste, touch, chew, swallow, and convey our feelings and emotions through facial expressions. However, oral diseases, which range from cavities to oral cancer, cause pain and disability for millions of Americans each year.

- **Tooth decay (cavities)** is a common, preventable problem for people of all ages. It is an infection, bacterial in origin, that causes demineralization and destruction of the hard tissues of the teeth. It is a result of the production of acid by bacterial fermentation of food debris accumulated on the tooth surface. If demineralization exceeds saliva and other re-mineralization factors, such as from calcium and fluoridated toothpastes, these hard tissues progressively break down, producing dental caries (cavities or holes in the teeth). Today, caries remains one of the most common diseases throughout the world.

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- **Periodontal (gum) disease** is an infection caused by bacteria that gets under the gum tissue and begins to destroy the gums and bone. Teeth become loose, chewing becomes difficult, and teeth may have to be extracted. Gum disease also may be connected to damage elsewhere in the body; recent studies link oral infections with diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and premature, low-weight births. Further research is under way to examine these connections.

Children’s Oral Health

Tooth decay affects children in the United States more than any other chronic infectious disease. Untreated tooth decay causes pain and infections that may lead to problems, such as eating, speaking, playing, and learning.

The good news is that tooth decay and other oral diseases that can affect children are preventable. The combination of dental sealants and fluoride has the potential to nearly eliminate tooth decay in school-age children.

What Parents and Caregivers Can Do

Here are some things you can do to ensure good oral health for your child:

- Encourage your children to eat regular nutritious meals and avoid frequent between-meal snacking.
- Protect your child’s teeth with fluoride.
 - Use fluoride toothpaste. If your child is less than 7 years old, put only a pea-sized amount on their toothbrush.
 - If your drinking water is not fluoridated, talk to a dentist or physician about the best way to protect your child’s teeth.
- Talk to your child’s dentist about dental sealants. They protect teeth from decay.
- If you are pregnant, get prenatal care and eat a healthy diet. The diet should include folic acid to prevent birth defects of the brain and spinal cord and possibly cleft lip/palate.

Early care for your children’s teeth will protect their smile and their health.

Adult Oral Health

The baby boomer generation will be the first where the majority will maintain their natural teeth over their entire lifetime, having benefited from water fluoridation and fluoride toothpastes.

Over the past 10 years, the number of adults missing all their natural teeth has declined from 31 percent to 25 percent for those aged 60 years and older, and from 9 percent to 5 percent for those adults between 40 and 59 years. However, five percent means a surprising one out of 20 middle-aged adults is missing all their teeth.

Toothaches are the most common pain of the mouth or face reported by adults. This pain can interfere with vital functions such as eating, swallowing, and talking. Almost one of every four adults reported some form of facial pain in the past six months.

Most adults show signs of gum disease. Severe gum disease affects about 14 percent of adults aged 45 to 54 years.

Seventy percent of adults reported visiting a dentist in the past 12 months. Those with incomes at or above the poverty level are much more likely to report a visit to a dentist in the past 12 months as those with lower incomes.

What You Can Do to Maintain Good Oral Health

- Drink fluoridated water and use fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride’s protection against tooth decay works at all ages.
- Take care of your teeth and gums. Thorough tooth brushing and flossing to reduce dental plaque can prevent gingivitis — the mildest form of gum disease.



- Avoid tobacco. In addition to the general health risks posed by tobacco, smokers have four times the risk of developing gum disease compared to non-smokers. Tobacco use in any form – cigarette, pipes, and smokeless (spit) tobacco – increases the risk for gum disease, oral and throat cancers, and oral fungal infection. Spit tobacco containing sugar increases the risk of tooth decay.
- Limit alcohol. Heavy use of alcohol is also a risk factor for oral and throat cancers. When used alone, alcohol and tobacco are risk factors for oral cancers, but when used in combination the effects of alcohol and tobacco are even greater.
- Eat wisely. Adults should avoid snacks full of sugars and starches. Limit the number of snacks eaten throughout the day. The recommended five-a-day helping of fiber-rich fruits and vegetables stimulates salivary flow to aid re-mineralization of tooth surfaces with early stages of tooth decay.
- Visit the dentist regularly. Check-ups can detect early signs of oral health problems and can lead to treatments that will prevent further damage, and in some cases, reverse the problem. Professional tooth cleaning (prophylaxis) also is important for preventing oral problems, especially when self-care is difficult.
- Diabetic patients should work to maintain control of their disease. This will help prevent the complications of diabetes, including an increased risk of gum disease.
- If medications produce a dry mouth, ask your doctor if there are other drugs that can be substituted. If dry mouth cannot be avoided, drink plenty of water, chew sugarless gum, and avoid tobacco and alcohol.
- Have an oral health check-up before beginning cancer treatment. Radiation to the head or neck and/or chemotherapy may cause problems for your teeth and gums. Treating existing oral health problems before cancer therapy may help prevent or limit oral complications or tissue damage.

Source: Centers for Disease Control. www.cdc.gov. Accessed July 18, 2014.

Holiday Food Safety

Many people don't realize that food safety is the most important ingredient in preparing food for the holidays. Below are four helpful food safety resources to prevent foodborne illness and keep your holidays happy.

Clean: Wash hands and surfaces often.

Separate: Separate raw meats from other foods.

Cook: Cook to the right temperature.

Chill: Refrigerate food promptly.

1. Clean: The first rule of safe food preparation in the home is to keep everything clean.

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling any food. For children, this means the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.
- Wash food-contact surfaces (cutting boards, dishes, utensils, countertops) with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next item.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water and use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.
- Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking. Washing these foods makes it more likely for bacteria to spread to areas around the sink and countertops.

2. Separate: Don't give bacteria the opportunity to spread from one food to another (cross-contamination).

- Keep raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from foods that won't be cooked. Take this precaution while shopping in the store, when storing in the refrigerator at home, and while preparing meals.
- Consider using one cutting board only for foods that will be cooked (such as raw meat, poultry, and seafood) and another one for those that will not (such as raw fruits and vegetables).
- Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from other foods such as raw meat, poultry or seafood — and from kitchen utensils used for those products.
- Do not put cooked meat or other food that is ready to eat on an unwashed plate that has held any raw eggs, meat, poultry, seafood, or their juices.



3. Cook: Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill harmful bacteria.

- Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness! Use a food thermometer to make sure meat, poultry, and fish are cooked to a safe internal temperature. To check a turkey for safety, insert a food thermometer into the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. The turkey is safe when the temperature reaches 165°F. If the turkey is stuffed, the temperature of the stuffing should be 165°F.
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. When making your own eggnog or other recipe calling for raw eggs, use pasteurized shell eggs, liquid or frozen pasteurized egg products, or powdered egg whites.
- Don't eat uncooked cookie dough, which may contain raw eggs.

4. Chill: Refrigerate foods quickly because harmful bacteria grow rapidly at room temperature.

- Refrigerate leftovers and takeout foods – and any type of food that should be refrigerated – within two hours. That includes pumpkin pie!
- Set your refrigerator at or below 40°F and the freezer at 0°F. Check both periodically with an appliance thermometer.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Food can be defrosted safely in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.
- Allow the correct amount of time to properly thaw food. For example, a 20-pound turkey needs four to five days to thaw completely when thawed in the refrigerator.
- Don't taste food that looks or smells questionable. A good rule to follow is: when in doubt, throw it out.
- Leftovers should be used within three to four days.

Source: US Food and Drug Administration. www.fda.gov. Aug. 14, 2014.

Ready-to-Cook Foods: Follow Directions to Keep Your Holidays Happy

Eating them right out of the package, without cooking, could make you sick.

Cookies are a holiday favorite — and this season is a good time to remind ourselves that ready-to-cook foods of all kinds, including raw, packaged cookie dough, do need to be cooked. Eating these kinds of foods right out of the package, without cooking them, could make you sick from bacteria. Cooking them according to the package directions before you eat them kills bacteria that could make you sick.

Whether it's packaged cookie dough or a frozen entrée or pizza or any of the other ready-to-cook foods we use for convenience, cook or bake them according to the directions on the package to help keep your holidays happy.

Most people who get sick from bacteria in ready-to-cook foods that aren't cooked properly will get better by themselves, although foodborne illness isn't a very pleasant way to spend the holidays. But

anyone, of any age or health condition, could get very sick or die from these bacteria. This is especially true for people with weak immune systems; for example, the very young, the elderly, and people with diseases that weaken the immune system or who are on medicines that suppress the immune system (for example, some medicines used for rheumatoid arthritis).

Pregnant women also need to be especially careful to follow cooking directions on packages, since some bacteria are very harmful or deadly to unborn babies.

It's a good safety tip to keep in mind all year, not just in the holiday season: Follow the directions on your ready-to-cook food packages to help keep yourself and your loved ones healthy.

Source: US Food and Drug Administration. www.fda.gov. Aug. 14, 2014.

Get Going: Pushups!

Step 1

Lie on the floor face down and place your hands in line with your shoulders while holding your torso up, arms extended.

Step 2

Lower yourself down until your chest almost touches the floor.

Step 3

Breathe out and press your upper body back to the starting position while squeezing your chest.

Step 4

Pause at the top and begin to lower yourself down again.



For beginners, this can be modified and performed on your knees or against a wall. For those more advanced, you can elevate your feet on a step or bench to target the upper chest muscles more. When starting out, strive for three sets of 8–10 repetitions and slowly work your way up.

Conscientious Cuisine: Square Apple Pie

- 3½ lbs. apples, peeled, quartered and cored
- 1 Tbsp. unsalted sweet butter
- 2 – 4 Tbsp. (packed) brown sugar
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. ground ginger
- Pinches of ground cloves and grated nutmeg
- 1 prepared crust for a 9-inch pie (about 10½-inches), preferably whole-wheat
- 1 Tbsp. milk
- 2 tsp. natural cane sugar

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Coat 13-inch x 9-inch x 2-inch heatproof glass baking dish with cooking spray and set aside.

Cut apples into slices, varying from 1/8-inch to 1/2-inch. In large skillet, melt butter over medium-high heat. Add sliced apples, stirring to coat them with butter. Cook until apples look shiny and wet and thin slices are flexible, about 6 minutes, stirring them well 4 or 5 times. Off heat, add brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and nutmeg and mix well to combine with hot apples. Spread apples in an even layer in prepared baking dish and set aside.

Following package directions, unroll piecrust on your work surface. Using sharp knife, cut away enough on four sides to create a 9-inch square with rounded corners. Cut the crust crosswise into 3 even strips. Cut each strip vertically into thirds, making 9 squares. Keep 8 pieces, discarding a rounded corner piece. One



at a time, lightly run rolling pin over each square in one direction, making 4-inch by 3 1/2-inch rectangles and squaring rounded corner of 3 squares. Re-trim squares to neaten those that remain uneven in one corner; they do not need to be perfect. Line up crust pieces in 2 rows of 4 on top of apples in baking dish, leaving a bit of space between pieces. Brush tip of each rectangle with milk just to lightly moisten. Sprinkle sugar evenly over pieces of crust.

Bake pie for 30-35 minutes, or until crusts are deep golden brown and apples are tender but still hold their shape. Cool to lukewarm or room temperature before serving. For crisp crust, this pie is best served the day it is baked.

Makes 8 servings.

Per serving: 214 calories, 7 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 40 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 105 mg sodium.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research. www.aicr.org. Accessed July 14, 2014.

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