

HEALTH EDUCATION ON ORAL HEALTH

Oral Health refers to the health of our mouth.

Although preventable to some extent, untreated tooth decay (cavities) is the most common oral health condition

Consequences of untreated oral diseases

- Pain
- Reduced quality of life
- Lost school days
- Disruption to family life
- Decreased work productivity

What is a healthy mouth?

The mouth (also called oral cavity) starts at the lips and ends at the throat.

A healthy mouth and well-functioning teeth are important at all stages of life since they support functions like breathing, speaking and eating.

In a healthy mouth tissues are moist, odor free and pain free.

A healthy mouth includes healthy teeth, gingival tissue (gums) and the supporting tissues (periodontium)

A healthy mouth has:

1. Healthy gums- gums are firm not red or swollen and do not bleed when brushed or flossed.
2. No untreated tooth decay
3. No evidence of lumps
4. No ulcers



5. No unusual color on or under the tongue, cheeks or gums.
6. Teeth should not be wiggly but firmly attached to the gingiva and bone.
7. It should not hurt to chew or brush your teeth.

Oral health and nutrition:

- ✓ What you eat and drink affects your teeth.
- ✓ Foods rich in calcium e.g. plain yoghurt, milk, cheese, leafy greens and foods rich in phosphorus help by protecting and rebuilding tooth enamel. Protein rich foods like meat, poultry, fish milk eggs are great source of phosphorus.
- ✓ Fruits and vegetables are good choices when you want a healthy smile. They are high in water and fibers which balance the sugars they hold and help to clean the teeth, they also stimulate saliva which help wash away acids and foods from the teeth. Many fruits have vitamins c which is important for healthy gum and healing vitamin a is also key in building tooth enamel.
- ✓ Water is the best drink for your teeth. It helps keep your mouth clean and helps fight dry mouth. Drinking water with fluoride is beneficial to help prevent cavities.

Oral Health Tips

Here are some actions you can take to support good oral health.

1. Drink fluoridated water and brush with fluoride toothpaste.
2. Practice good oral hygiene, brush teeth twice a day thoroughly and floss daily between the teeth to remove dental plaque.
3. Visit your dentist at least once a year.
4. Do not use any tobacco products. If you smoke, try to quit.
5. Limit alcoholic drinks. Some alcoholics drinks can be very acidic resulting to erosion of tooth enamel and those with a high alcohol content can lead to a dry mouth.
6. If you have diabetes work to support control of the disease, this will decrease the risk for other complications e.g. gum diseases.



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

7. If your medication causes dry mouth discuss other options with your doctors that may not cause this condition.
8. See your doctor or dentist if you experience sudden change in taste or smell.
9. When acting as a caregiver, help those who are not able to brush and floss their teeth independently.
10. Chew sugar free gum between meals and/or when you are unable to brush after a meal.

