

FAQs

What is dentistry?

Dentistry is the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of conditions, disorders, and diseases of the tooth, gums, mouth, and jaw. Often considered necessary for complete oral health, dentistry can have an impact on the health of your entire body.

Who is a dentist?

A dentist is a specialist who works to diagnose, treat, and prevent oral health problems. Your dentist has completed at least eight years of schooling and received either a DDS (doctor of dental surgery) degree, or a DMD (doctor of dental medicine) degree. If your doctor is a pediatric dentist, this means that he or she specializes in caring for children from infancy through their teen years. Your dentist has received the proper education and training needed to work with young kids. Other specializations include:



- Endodontics (root canals)
- Oral and maxillofacial (including pathology, radiology, and surgery)
- Orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics
- Pediatric Dentistry (dental care for children)
- Periodontics (gum disease)
- Prosthodontics (implants)

Why is visiting the dentist so important?

Visiting the dentist regularly not only will help keep your teeth and mouth healthy but will also help keep the rest of your body healthy. Dental care is important because it:

- Helps prevent tooth decay
- Protects against periodontal (gum) disease, which can lead to tooth and bone loss
- Prevents bad breath — brushing, flossing, and seeing the dentist regularly will help reduce the amount of bad-breath causing bacteria in your mouth
- Gives you a more attractive smile and increases your self-confidence
- Helps keep teeth looking bright by preventing them from becoming stained by food, drinks, and tobacco
- Strengthens your teeth so you can enjoy healthy, beautiful smiles for the rest of your life!

My teeth feel fine. Do I still need to see a dentist?

Your teeth may feel fine, but it's still important to see the dentist regularly because problems can exist without you knowing. Your smile's appearance is important, and your dentist can help keep your smile healthy and looking beautiful. With so many

advances in dentistry, you no longer have to settle for stained, chipped, missing, or misshapen teeth. Today's dentists offer many treatment choices that can help you smile with confidence, including:

- Professional teeth whitening
- Fillings that mimic the appearance of natural teeth
- Tooth replacement and full smile makeovers

What should I look for when choosing the right dentist for me?

Choosing a dentist who "clicks" with you and your family is important, and you may wish to consider several dentists before making your final decision. During your first visit, you should be able to determine if the dentist is right for you. During your appointment, consider the following:

- Is the appointment schedule convenient?
- Is the office easy to get to and close by?
- Does the office appear to be clean and orderly?
- Was your medical and dental history recorded and placed in a permanent file?
- Does the dentist explain techniques for good oral health?
- Is information about cost presented to you before treatment is scheduled?
- Is your dentist a member of the ADA (American Dental Association)?

How can I take care of my teeth in-between dental checkups?

- ALWAYS remember to brush your teeth at least two times a day, and floss at least once!
- Make sure to use toothpaste that contains fluoride, and ask your dentist if you need a fluoride rinse. This will help prevent cavities.
- Avoid foods with a lot of sugar (sugar increases the amount of bacteria that grows in your mouth, causing more plaque and possibly cavities) and avoid tobacco (this can stain your teeth, cause gum disease, and lead to oral cancer)
- Don't be afraid to brush your tongue! By brushing your tongue, you will remove food particles and reduce the amount of plaque-causing bacteria. Tongue brushing also helps keep your breath fresh.
- Be sure to schedule your routine checkup. It is recommended that you visit the dentist every six months.

At what age should I start taking my child to see the dentist?

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends that children first see a dentist as early as six months old and no later than one year old. During this time, your child's baby teeth will be coming in, and your dentist can examine the health of your child's first few teeth. After the first visit, be sure to schedule regular checkups every six months.

How often should I see the dentist?

Children, teens, and adults should all see the dentist for a regular checkup at least once every six months. Patients who are at a greater risk for oral cancer or gum disease may be required to see the dentist more than just twice a year. Your dentist will help

determine how often you should visit the dentist for regular checkups.

What is a cavity?

A cavity is a small hole that forms inside the tooth and is caused by tooth decay. Cavities are formed when plaque build-up on the outside of the tooth combines with sugars and starches in the food you eat. This can produce an acid that can eat away the enamel on your tooth. If a cavity is left untreated, it can lead to more serious oral health problems. Cavities can be prevented by remembering to brush your teeth at least two times a day and floss in-between teeth at least once.

What is a filling?

A filling is a synthetic material that your dentist uses to fill a cavity after all of the tooth decay has been removed. Fillings do not generally hurt because your dentist will numb your mouth with an anesthetic. Fillings are made from a variety of different materials, including composites, gold, or ceramic. If you need a filling, be sure to talk to your doctor about what type is best for you and your teeth.

How often should I brush my teeth?

According to your dentist and the American Dental Association, you should be brushing your teeth at least two times a day. Brushing keeps your teeth, gums, and mouth clean and healthy by removing plaque-causing bacteria. It is also recommended that when you brush your teeth, you use a soft bristle toothbrush and toothpaste that contains fluoride. You should spend at least a minute on the top teeth and a minute on the bottom teeth, and remember to brush your tongue; it will help keep your breath smelling fresh!

When should I change my toothbrush?

Your toothbrush will eventually wear out, especially if you are brushing your teeth two times a day for two to three minutes each time. Your dentist recommends that adults and children should change their toothbrush every three months. If you are using an electric toothbrush, be sure to read the directions, as you may not need to change toothbrush heads as frequently. Patients with gum disease are encouraged to change their toothbrush every four to six weeks in order to keep any bacteria from spreading. After brushing, rinse your toothbrush with hot water to kill germs and keep the bristles clean. If you've been sick, be sure to change your toothbrush as soon as possible.

What is gum disease?

Also known as periodontal disease, gum disease is mostly caused by plaque and bacteria build-up that is not treated in its early stage. Other causes of periodontal disease include tobacco use, teeth grinding, some medications, and genetics. Gingivitis is the beginning stage of gum disease, and, if detected, is treatable. Gingivitis left untreated may turn into gum disease. Advanced gum disease will lead to tooth and bone loss, and is a permanent condition. Brushing your teeth regularly, and visiting the dentist every six months will help prevent gingivitis and more severe cases of periodontal disease. Common signs of gum disease are:

- Red, irritated, bleeding, or swollen gums
- Chronic bad breath
- Loose teeth, or loss of teeth
- Extreme tooth sensitivity
- Receding gum line

- Abscessed teeth

If I have braces, do I still need dental checkups every six months?

Yes! In fact, it's even more important for patients receiving orthodontic treatment to visit their dentist regularly. With braces, food may be caught in places your toothbrush can't reach. This causes bacteria to build up and can lead to cavities, gingivitis, and gum disease. Your dentist will work closely with your orthodontist to make sure that your teeth stay clean and healthy while wearing braces.

How do I schedule my next checkup?

Simply call our practice! Our front desk staff will be happy to help schedule your next dental checkup at your convenience. If you are a new patient, please let us know, and we will provide you with all the information you need for your first dental visit.