The tooth & nothing but the tooth



KANIKSU
COMMUNITY HEALTH

BETTER ORAL HEALTH - BETTER OVERALL HEALTH

Preventive dental care is important throughout your life, no matter your age. By practicing good oral hygiene at home and scheduling regular checkups with your dentist, you can help keep your smile bright and healthy for many years to come.

WHAT IS PREVENTIVE DENTISTRY?

Preventive dentistry is dental care that helps maintain good oral health. It's a combination of regular dental check-ups along with developing good habits like brushing and flossing. Taking care of your teeth starts early in childhood and extends throughout the course of your life. Preventive dentistry services may include:

- Regular oral exams, usually every 6 months
- Teeth cleaning
- Routine X-rays

Your dental plan may cover you fully for preventive care, depending on the type of dental plan you have.

WHAT'S YOUR ROLE IN PREVENTIVE DENTAL CARE?

Much of your preventive dental care starts with you. Developing healthy dental habits early in life can help reduce cavities, gum disease, and gingivitis. Here are the basics of good oral health:

- Brush your teeth at least 2 times a day—usually morning and night—using a soft bristled brush and a fluoride toothpaste. Your dentist can recommend the best toothbrush and toothpaste for you. They can also instruct you on how to properly brush.
- Floss daily to get food that's stuck between teeth before it turns to plaque.
- Use a mouthwash to rinse out food particles after flossing.
- Avoid acidic foods that can harm tooth enamel.
- Be cautious with hard foods, like some candies, foods with bones, seeds, or pits that could damage or chip teeth.
- Don't smoke or use tobacco products—these can lead to cancer and other dental problems.
- Use a mouth guard when participating in certain sports.
- If you grind your teeth at night, ask your dentist for a nighttime mouth guard to help reduce gum recession.

DON'T FORGET THE FLUORIDE

Fluoride, a mineral that occurs naturally in many foods and water, helps prevent tooth decay. Fluoride reverses early decay and remineralizes your tooth enamel. While fluoride can be harmful in large quantities, it's difficult to reach toxic levels due to the low amount of fluoride in over-the-counter products like toothpastes and mouth rinses.
Fluoride is often called nature's cavity fighter, and for good reason. Cavities are caused by bacteria that live in our mouths. They feed on leftover food they find there, including sugary foods and drinks. When these bacteria consume sugars, they release acids that attack tooth enamel. Over time, damage to this protective outer layer of our teeth sets the stage for tooth decay. Fluoride helps fight cavities by repairing the damage these acids can do to our teeth. The repair process is called remineralization.

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