



# Dental Health for Seniors

## Keep Your Teeth for Life

### Healthy Mouth, Healthy Body

Did you know that bacteria in your mouth can lead to oral diseases and health problems for your heart and lungs? Taking care of your mouth and teeth is important for your overall health.

#### TIPS FOR GOOD DENTAL HABITS

- Brush your natural teeth at least twice a day.
- Use a soft toothbrush with no more than a pea size amount of fluoridated toothpaste.
- If you have trouble brushing your teeth with a regular toothbrush, try using an electric toothbrush.
- Floss once per day.
- Regular check-ups with the dentist are important for good oral health. You should still see the dentist even if you have few remaining teeth or no natural teeth.
- Visit a dentist when you have any concerns.
- Clean your dentures every day and take them out to brush your natural teeth and gums.
- Soak your dentures overnight.
- If your mouth is often dry, talk to a dentist about ways to help keep your mouth moist.
- Look out for signs of gum disease such as red, swollen, bleeding, and painful gums.
- Healthy teeth should not be broken, loose, chipped, or painful.
- Look out for signs of oral cancer such as abnormal growth in your mouth.
- Avoid using tobacco products, as it increases your risk of oral cancer, stains, and bad breath.

#### TIPS FOR GOOD EATING AND DRINKING HABITS

- Eat plenty of dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and foods that are low in sugars.
- Limit sweets to special occasions.
- Choose sugar-free chewing gum and/or lozenges.
- Drink tap water throughout the day.
- Avoid sugary drinks like soft drinks, and drinks with sugar added to them. Sugary drinks often lead to cavities and teeth breakdown.
- Limit the amount of sugar you add to drinks such as tea and coffee.
- Limit the amount of juice you drink. The natural sugar and acid it contains cause cavities and teeth breakdown.
- Avoid drinking alcohol, as it raises the risk of gum inflammation and oral cancer.

