

## More Tips to Keep Your Teeth and Gums Healthy

Most people recognize how important it is to keep your teeth and gums healthy, but over time, different lifestyle factors can negatively impact your periodontal health. To help maintain healthy teeth and gums, keep these tips in mind:

### Strive to be stress free

Minimize the stress in your life. Research has shown that people who are having a difficult time coping with stress can neglect their oral hygiene.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, researchers have also associated the hormone cortisol with periodontal disease.<sup>2</sup> Chronic stress has been shown to increase levels of cortisol, and these increased levels can be a factor in developing periodontal disease.

### Kick the tobacco habit

Tobacco use is one of the most significant risk factors in the development and progression of periodontal disease. Tobacco's negative effects on oral health are well documented. Most people that have recurrent periodontal disease are smokers, and smoking is also associated with complications after oral surgery.

### Drink alcohol in moderation

Drinking the occasional glass of red wine has been shown to have positive effects on the body; however, heavy drinking can

negatively impact your oral health. Alcohol can irritate your gums, tongue, and other oral tissues. It can also contribute to poor healing after surgery and can halt your oral hygiene routine. In addition, heavy drinkers often suffer from tooth decay as a result of the increased exposure to sugars and acids that are often found in alcoholic drinks.

### Stock up on healthy foods

You know that a healthy diet is important for your overall health, but it's also very important for your oral health! A good diet will help your immune system be at its best to help fight infections, including periodontal disease. In addition to eating a well-balanced, nutritious diet, research has shown that both yogurt<sup>3</sup> and green tea<sup>4</sup> may add an extra boost to your periodontal health.

1. Peruzzo, DC et al. A systematic review of stress and psychological factors as possible risk factors for periodontal disease. *J Periodontol.* 2007 Aug;78(8):1491-504.
2. Cury PR et al. Hydrocortisone Affects the Expression of Matrix Metalloproteinases (MMP-1, -2, -3, -7, and -11) and Tissue Inhibitor of Matrix Metalloproteinases (TIMP-1) in Human Gingival Fibroblasts. *J Periodontol.* 2007 Jul;78(7):1309-15.
3. Shimazaki Y et al. Intake of Dairy Products and Periodontal Disease: The Hisayama Study. *J Periodontol.* 2008 Jan;79(1):131-7.
4. Kushiyama M et al. Relationship Between Intake of Green Tea and Periodontal Disease. *J Periodontol.* 2009 Mar;80(3):372-7.



## Genetics can affect oral health, too!

Family history may make a difference in your overall health, including periodontal disease. Periodontal disease is multifactorial, which means you can be susceptible due to genetics as well as environmental factors such as diet and smoking. Your genes play a major role in the onset and severity of periodontal disease.

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