



# Smile on

## A healthier mouth, a healthier you

### Your oral health matters more than you think

Day and night, you make it a priority to take care of your teeth and mouth. You brush to ward off cavities. You do it to avoid bad breath. More than anything, you do it to maintain a beautiful smile. But studies show that good oral health may be a vital part of your overall health.

There's a mouth-body connection. What goes on in your mouth can affect the rest of your body. And at the same time, what goes on in your body can also affect your mouth.

### A big role in your overall well-being

Having a healthy mouth and smile can do more than just boost your self-esteem. It also helps you avoid problems in your mouth, such as gum disease. Gum disease can increase your risk for other serious health problems, too.<sup>1</sup> Practice good oral care, and you can:

- Cut your risk for heart disease
- Lower your risk of stroke
- Lower the chances of premature birth
- Help lower your risk of diabetes

<sup>1</sup>The University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry. What can my dentist tell me about my overall health? February 8, 2018. Available at: [dentistry.uic.edu/patients/oral-health-overall-health](https://dentistry.uic.edu/patients/oral-health-overall-health). Accessed April 4, 2019.



# Make time for your mouth health

Help protect your oral health by sticking with a routine that involves the following:



## Brush twice a day

Try for at least two minutes each time. This removes plaque, which can lead to damaged teeth, gums and surrounding bone.



## Limit your sugar intake

Food and drinks containing a lot of sugar can cause tooth decay.



## Clean your tongue

Practice cleaning it with a scraper or a soft-bristle toothbrush. Stroke in a back-to-front direction.



## Avoid using tobacco

It can cause gum disease or oral cancer.



## Floss daily

This removes plaque and food particles from places where a toothbrush can't easily reach.



## Visit your dentist regularly

Schedule dental checkups at least twice a year.

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