



**Your All Access Pass to a...**

*Healthy* **Mouth**  
*Healthy* **YOU**



Ontario

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## Introduction

Your mouth is the gateway to your body. It is impossible to be truly healthy without a healthy mouth. The health of your mouth is affected by the foods you eat and drink, how well you clean your teeth and other habits you have.

Oral diseases like cavities and gum disease are chronic and get more complex with time. They can affect your ability to eat and speak, as well as the way you look. Oral diseases are preventable.

**Remember, a healthy mouth means a healthy you.**



# Tobacco and Your Mouth

**All forms** of tobacco products are dangerous to your health, including cigarettes, cigarillos, spit/chew tobacco and marijuana.



## **Tobacco Use:**

- **Can** cause cancer, as well as heart and lung disease
- **Can** cause cancer of the mouth, lips and throat
- **Can** increase the risk of developing gum disease
- **Will** stain your teeth and cause bad breath
- **Does not** help you lose weight

## **Spit/chew Tobacco:**

- Is **not** a safe substitute for cigarettes
- **Contains more than 3,000 chemicals**, including 28 chemicals that cause cancer
- Contains **three times** the amount of nicotine found in cigarettes

## Quitting Tobacco Use... don't go it alone

**Former spit tobacco user lost his jaw due to oral cancer.**

Many young smokers have already **quit**.

Hard? **Yes!**  
Impossible? **No!**

### Online Support

- [quit4life.com](http://quit4life.com)
- [quitnet.com](http://quitnet.com)
- [smokershelpline/online.ca](http://smokershelpline/online.ca)
- [gosmokefree.ca](http://gosmokefree.ca)
- [HealthyOntario.com](http://HealthyOntario.com)

### Telephone Counselling

- Smokers' Helpline: **1-877-513-5333**

Tobacco products are **extremely** addictive. Seek support from a stop smoking group, a teacher, medical doctor or your local public health unit.



*Quitting Tobacco Use... don't go it alone*

## Oral Sex

- Unprotected oral sex will put you at risk of sexually transmitted diseases.
- HPV (human papillomavirus) as well as chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, hepatitis and HIV can be transmitted through oral sex.
- Several strains of HPV are now thought to cause as many cancers of the upper throat as tobacco and alcohol.
- Practising safe sex, which includes the use of a condom, **may** reduce your risk of getting HPV, and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- Condoms and dental dams are available through your local public health unit.
- The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care offers HPV vaccination to young women in Grade 8, through a school-based vaccination program administered by public health nurses. Check with your doctor or local public health unit for more information.



# Oral Piercing/Tattooing

Oral piercing has become a popular form of self-expression. You need to know that piercing the tongue, cheek and lips can have painful and sometimes fatal consequences.



## Risks of Oral Piercing Include:

- Blood borne diseases such as **Hepatitis B or C** and **HIV/AIDS**
- Serious infection of the piercing site
- Choking on the jewellery
- Allergic reactions to the metal
- Injury to the gums
- Chipped teeth
- Difficulty eating and speaking
- Changes in the taste of food



## Oral Tattooing

The greatest health risk with oral tattooing is the transmission of **Hepatitis B or C** and **HIV/AIDS**.

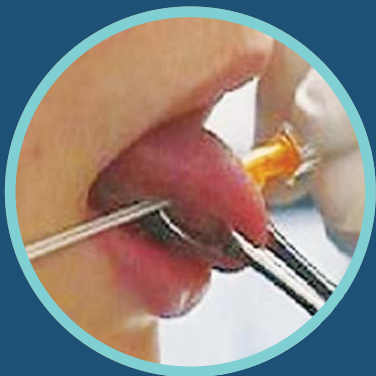
Always use a professional artist who operates out of a public shop or studio. Home-based piercing/tattooing is **NOT** recommended. Ask if the studio has been inspected by the local Health Department.

**REMEMBER, DO YOUR HOMEWORK. BE SMART!**

Oral Piercing/Tattooing

## Mouth Care After Piercing/Tattooing

- **Avoid** aspirin, large amounts of caffeine and alcoholic beverages (these may increase bleeding).
- **Avoid** spicy, salty, acidic or hot foods and beverages (these can irritate the site).
- Be sure to practice good home care, using a new, soft toothbrush.
- **Rinse** with salt water or alcohol-free mouth rinses (no more than twice a day).
- **Do not** play with the jewellery; this will irritate the piercing site and may chip your teeth.
- **Do not** engage in oral sex until the site is fully healed.
- **Avoid** chewing your fingernails, gum, candy, etc..
- **Stop** smoking or using any tobacco.





## Dental Grills *(also known as grillz, fronts, plates, caps, shines or slugs)*

A grill is a decorative metal appliance that is usually placed over the top front teeth. They can be removable or cemented to your teeth. As with oral piercing/tattooing, there are risks involved with wearing these dental grills.

### Know the Risks

- Decay can occur around poorly fitting grills.
- Bacteria trapped under the grill can cause bad breath, gum disease and bone loss.
- The metal may cause an allergic reaction.
- Chipping of your teeth may occur.



### Mouth Care

- ✓ Choose a grill that is removable.
- ✓ Remove grills before eating or sleeping.
- ✓ Clean the grill daily to remove plaque and food debris using a toothbrush and water (do not use jewellery cleaners).
- ✓ Brush and floss your teeth daily.
- ✓ Schedule regular cleanings and dental examinations.

If you are considering a grill, speak to your dental professional first to understand the risks.

*Dental Grills (also known as grillz, fronts, plates, caps, shines or slugs)*

## Eating Disorders



People who have anorexia or bulimia may experience problems with their teeth. Those who suffer from these disorders may vomit excessively, use laxatives, binge or stop eating.

1. As a result of self-induced vomiting, stomach acids can damage the teeth, resulting in the need for dental treatment (root canals, crowns/caps).
2. Drinking pop, fruit juice and “sport/energy” drinks can increase your risk of tooth decay and erosion of tooth enamel.
3. Teeth may become sensitive to hot and cold drinks and/or sweet foods.

If you suffer from any of these disorders, see your family doctor or dental professional. Seek support from a family member or friend.



## Meth Mouth

Street drugs such as methamphetamine and cocaine can cause serious problems for your oral health.

A seventeen-year-old needed dentures to replace his suddenly decayed teeth.

A woman had teeth that had turned into “little black stubs” too painful to brush and wound up losing all her top teeth and six of her lower ones... due to meth use.



### **Methamphetamine:**

- Can cause serious health problems.

### **Street Names:**

Meth, ice, speed, crank, quartz, crystal, chalk, white crunch, glass.

### **Ingredients:**

Battery acid, lantern fuel, drain cleaner, antifreeze, hydraulic and sulfuric acids, lye, red phosphorus (red end of matches).

- These ingredients are corrosive and will burn skin, create sores and cause infections.

## Meth Mouth: Effects on Your Teeth

Teeth can turn greyish-brown, twist and fall out.

**This can happen within a few months!**



*Meth Mouth: Effects on Your Teeth*

During recovery from addiction you might be prescribed methadone. Methadone can cause you to have “dry mouth.” This puts you at greater risk for cavities. If you are taking methadone, make sure you keep your teeth clean, don’t snack on sweet foods and drink plenty of water to help keep your mouth moist.

# Herpes

Herpes is a an infectious disease caused by the herpes simplex virus. It produces blisters or sores that mainly affect the mouth or genital area. An infected person remains infected for life. Herpes is usually spread by direct contact with the sores.

## Symptoms:

- Mouth/Genital sores – a person may first experience a burning or tingling sensation before the appearance of painful blisters, which then turn into sores.
- Fever – common during first outbreak.
- Flu-like symptoms.
- Enlarged lymph glands in the neck or groin area.
- Sores will normally heal within seven to 10 days.

## Prevention:

- **Avoid** contact with an open sore.
- **Avoid** oral, vaginal or anal sex when you have an outbreak.
- The use of condoms may lower the risk of infection.
- Wait until the sores are completely healed to engage in sexual activity.

## HERPES IS CONTAGIOUS – AVOID SPREADING THE VIRUS!

## Treatment:

- See your doctor.
- Herpes **cannot** be cured, but can be managed.
- Medications may help prevent outbreaks.

## Aphthous Ulcers (Canker Sores)

- Canker sores are small white ulcers surrounded by an area of redness. They are **not contagious**.
- They are usually found **inside** the mouth, on cheeks, tongue and lips. Occurrence is **common** and may reoccur. The cause is unknown.
- Canker sores **should heal within seven to 10 days**, and non-prescription topical ointments and pain relievers can provide temporary relief.
- Warm **salt water** rinses may provide some relief.
- Avoid acidic and spicy foods and drinks (e.g., tomatoes, oranges, etc.).
- If you are getting sores **frequently** or if they occur in a **large number** at one time, you should see your dentist or doctor.



## Gingivitis (Gum Disease)

More than half of young adults have gum disease. Gum disease is the leading cause of tooth loss in adults. Research has shown a strong link between oral health and overall health.

- **Gingivitis** is inflammation of the gums.
- **Periodontitis** is a more advanced form of gum disease. If left untreated, it will eventually lead to tooth loss.

### Causes of Gingivitis

Plaque, which is made up of food particles and bacteria, must be removed daily with thorough brushing and flossing. If the plaque is not removed, it will harden into calculus (tartar), causing gum disease.

### Signs of Gingivitis

- Regular occurrence of bleeding gums when brushing or flossing.
- Red, swollen or tender gums.

## Signs of Periodontal Disease

- Any sign of gums pulling away from the teeth.
- Bad breath that won't go away.
- Sore, painful or loose adult teeth.
- Abscess (pus-filled swelling in the gum).
- Difficulty eating and increased sensitivity to hot and cold foods.

Signs of Periodontal Disease





## Periodontal Disease Treatment

- Gingivitis is easy to treat and is reversible.
- Visit your dental office for regular cleanings and checkups.
- Establish good daily brushing and flossing habits.
- Periodontal disease causes damage to the supporting structures of the teeth. Therefore, treatment is more extensive and sometimes requires gum surgery.
- Many other factors can contribute to gum disease, including tobacco use, alcohol use, stress, poor nutrition, serious illness and family history.
- Research has shown a link between gum disease and other systemic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, low birth weight babies, rheumatoid arthritis, obesity and osteoporosis.
- The evidence is very strong to show that gum disease will directly affect your diabetes. People who have more gum problems have a harder time controlling their diabetes.

### **ANUG (acute necrotizing ulcerative gingivitis)**

- This is an extremely painful gum condition causing red, swollen, ulcerated gums.
- It causes very bad breath.
- This condition occurs when young adults are under stress and their oral health is neglected.
- It is treated with antibiotics, mouth rinses and a professional cleaning.
- **Treatment should begin immediately.**

## Cavities (Tooth Decay)

Tooth decay (or cavities) is an infectious disease caused by bacteria. It is the most common chronic disease in young people.

- Cavities occur when sugar combines with bacteria in the plaque and produces acid which attacks the teeth.
- Cavities need to be fixed and they are expensive to treat.
- When left untreated, cavities can cause teeth to break, become infected and painful.
- Cavities are **preventable**.
- Teeth that are not cleaned properly at least once a day (brushing and flossing) will most likely develop cavities.



## Tooth Whiteners

Teeth come in many different shades. They are all beautiful, but some people want their teeth whiter. There are many products available to whiten your natural teeth. Bleaching will not change the colour of fillings, caps or dentures. Some products are ineffective, but bleaching gives the best result.



### Options

- Custom-made bleaching trays from a dental office will give results within one to two weeks.
- Other types of professional whitening will give results within two to three hours.
- Whitening strips for home use will give varying results.
- Whitening toothpastes, chewing gum and mouth rinses are not usually effective on their own.

### Risks

- Sensitive teeth.
- Sore, red, burning gums.

Speak to your dental professional for advice on the best product for you. The result of any bleaching product depends on the natural colour of your teeth, the amount of stain (tea, coffee and tobacco) and the concentration of bleach.

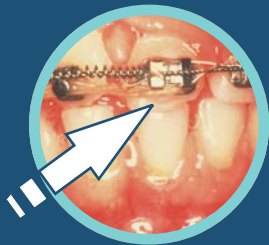
# Braces

- Teeth that do not fit together correctly are harder to keep clean and can make smiling, speaking and eating more difficult.
- Many pre-teens and young adults get braces to straighten crooked teeth and correct teeth and jaws that do not fit together properly.
- A dentist or orthodontist can evaluate whether or not you need braces.



## Care of Your Braces

- Follow instructions from your orthodontist.
- Visit your dental office for **regular** checkups and cleanings.
- Brush after **every** meal, cleaning thoroughly around the brackets.
- Floss at least **once a day**.
- **Avoid** foods that are hard, crunchy, sticky and high in sugar.
- **STOP THE POP (and other sugary drinks).**
- **Do not** chew on pens, pencils or your fingernails.
- **Remember**, orthodontic appliances only work when you wear them.



## Wisdom Teeth

Wisdom teeth (third molars) are the last permanent teeth to come in the mouth.

Many people do not have enough room in their mouth for them.

- They usually come in between 16 and 20 years of age.
- Wisdom teeth may grow sideways, come in only part way or remain trapped under the bone and gums (impacted).
- Some people never grow wisdom teeth.
- Your dentist may recommend removing them, because they may cause infection, pain and damage to other teeth.



Wisdom Teeth

## Depression, Anxiety and Stress

- Stress can leave your mouth a mess.
- Research has shown a strong link between **gum disease**, depression, anxiety and stress.
- Bad habits such as smoking, alcohol and drug use often increase during times of stress. Oral hygiene can become less important during these times.
- Gum disease that is left untreated can lead to bone loss and eventual tooth loss.



## Teeth Clenching/Bruxism

Clenching occurs when you hold your top and bottom back teeth tightly together. Bruxism is grinding your teeth together. It often occurs at night. These habits put pressure on the teeth, muscles and the structures around your jaw.

- **Clenching and/or grinding** can lead to headaches, earaches, damaged teeth and gums, as well TMJ (temporomandibular joint) problems. Causes of clenching and grinding include anxiety, stress and tension.
- In some cases, **grinding may be a complication of other medical problems** like Parkinson's disease, or a side effect from medications.
- See your dentist for **advice**. Your dentist might suggest an acrylic bite plate to help control your clenching and grinding habit.

To relieve symptoms of clenching and grinding, **find healthy ways to relieve stress** through exercise, nutritious eating habits, and maintaining a positive mental attitude.



## Mouthguards



A mouthguard is a plastic device worn in the mouth to help prevent injuries to the teeth, lips, cheeks, tongue, jaw and head.

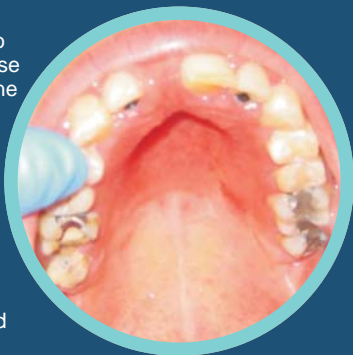
- There are three types of mouthguards:
  - “Custom-fitted.” This mouthguard is more expensive, but offers the best fit.
  - “Boil and Bite.” This type is relatively inexpensive and offers a better fit.
  - “Stock.” This is a ready-made type that is less expensive, but does not offer a good fit.
- A mouthguard should be worn for many sports activities, and it is a must for any contact sport.
- Keep your mouthguard clean by rinsing it with soap and water or a mouthwash after each use, then let it air dry.
- Store your mouthguard in a plastic perforated container to prevent damage.





## Care of Your Dentures

Teeth can be lost due to tooth decay, gum disease or injury. A denture is one option used to replace these teeth; it can be a partial or full denture. Just like your natural teeth, your dentures need good home care.



- Remove your full or partial dentures at night. Your gums need to breathe.
- With your toothbrush or denture brush and toothpaste, thoroughly clean all surfaces of the denture, especially the metal clasps on partials. Make sure it is free of plaque and food, then rinse with warm water. Make sure you have a firm grip, because dentures can break easily if dropped.
- Store your clean dentures in a container of cool water.
- To loosen stubborn stains and hard tartar deposits, try a 30-minute vinegar and water soak, consisting of 1 teaspoon of vinegar and 1 cup of water. Remove after 30 minutes, brush and rinse denture. Over the counter denture tablets are not needed for nighttime soaking.

*Care of Your Dentures*

## Brushing, Flossing and Mouthwash

- Every day, a sticky film called plaque forms on the teeth.
- Plaque (bacteria and food) must be removed daily.
- Brush and floss daily, especially at bedtime.
- Use a soft bristled toothbrush (manual or power brush).
- Remember, healthy gums do not bleed.
- Mouthwash will temporarily freshen your breath, but does not replace brushing and flossing.



## Oral Health Resources

Canadian Dental Association  
**[cda-adc.ca](http://cda-adc.ca)**

Canadian Dental Hygienist Association  
**[cdha.ca](http://cdha.ca)**

EatRight Ontario  
**[ontario.ca/eatright](http://ontario.ca/eatright)**

Healthy Ontario  
**[HealthyOntario.com](http://HealthyOntario.com)**

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide  
**[healthcanada.gc.ca](http://healthcanada.gc.ca)**

Health Canada  
**[Hc-sc.gc.ca](http://Hc-sc.gc.ca)**

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
**[cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)**

# Important Numbers

## Family Dentist:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Family Doctor:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Telehealth Ontario Info Line: **1-866-797-0000**

Poison Control: **1-800-268-9017**

ServiceOntario INFOline **1-866-532-3161**

Hours of operation: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

EatRight Ontario **1-877-510-510-2**

The EatRight service is available in more than 110 languages.

Hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday and Friday - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.,  
with extended hours on Tuesday and Thursday evenings until 9 p.m.

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