

### Oral Hygiene Matters

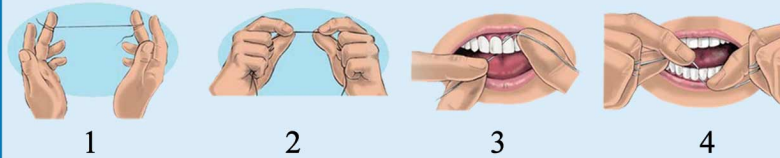
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Why do we have to keep our teeth clean? Most people already know the answer we want to prevent decay, bad breath and tooth loss! Nowadays more and more people are keeping their teeth throughout their lives. We can achieve this through good oral hygiene practice. The two most important we can do are 1) Brushing and 2) Flossing. We need to remove plaque, which is a sticky layer on our teeth formed by bacteria and food matter, in order to prevent dental problems.

**1) Brushing:** We learned to brush when we were children, but we may not be brushing the right way. First of all, we need to brush twice a day and at least for two minutes each time brushing all the surfaces. Secondly, do not brush too hard. As a dentist, I see many people are brushing way too hard, causing gum recession and tooth sensitivity. Use a toothbrush with soft bristles and change it regularly. Thirdly, pay more attention to the gum line as plaque accumulates in that area. Tilt the brush so that the bristles are pointing towards the gum line. Make circles with the brush in order to gently remove plaque. Last but not least, use fluoridated toothpaste to prevent cavities. How much toothpaste do we need? Only the size of a pea!



**2) Flossing:** The fact is, many people do not floss. It is never too late to start because it is crucial to remove plaque between teeth. Don't forget, brushing without flossing is only half the job done! Floss at least once a day. Most people floss before they brush at bedtime. The flossing technique is not too difficult. First, wind the floss around the middle fingers of both hands and hold it with your thumbs and forefingers. Then gently slide it between the teeth and never snap it down the gum. Move back and forth to take food particles out. Do this for all the spaces between your teeth, and if you are familiar with the technique, it only takes less than a minute to finish for the whole mouth!



What else can we do? Go for cleanings at the dental office regularly. No matter how well we can brush and floss, there will still be deposits that we cannot take out. Dentists can also teach us using special aids for cleaning dentures, bridges and other appliances in the mouth. Now we have already learned what to do, so let's start forming good dental habits and show others our healthy smile!

### Healthy Diet for Cancer Prevention

One third of cancers are preventable through healthy lifestyles including healthy eating, regular exercise, maintaining healthy weight and no smoking. Here are some tips sharing on healthy diet for cancer prevention:

- 1. Avoid high energy dense food:** 'High energy dense food' are small in size but high in fat and sugar. Examples are chocolates, chips, ice cream, burgers etc. Choose 'low energy dense' snack such as fruits, cherry tomato, low fat milk to prevent weight gain.
- 2. Eat wide variety of fruits and vegetables:** Different types of fruits and vegetables contain fiber and wide variety of nutrients which can prevent cancer by different means. Always choose fruits and vegetables with different colors in every meal.
- 3. Avoid preserved meat and eat less red meat:** Preserved meat such as sausages, ham, bacon are high in salt and fat which increases risk of cancer. Try to eat less than 500g of preserved meat and red meat including beef, pork and lamb in 1 week.
- 4. Avoid salty food:** Recommended daily salt intake is 6g (about 1 teaspoon) that includes table salt and hidden salt in preserved meat, instant noodles, biscuits, canned soup etc. High salt intake increases chance of stomach cancer.
- 5. Control alcohol portion:** Avoid alcohol is recommended. If necessary, men should restrict alcohol to less than 2 serves day (1 serve = 280ml beer or 125ml wine) while female should restrict to less than 1 serve a day.



Information provided by UCNCHS Community Nutrition Service, Community Dietitian Ms. Celcona Leung