

DENTAL TIPS FOR A HEALTHY SMILE

Oral health is important for overall health and well-being. Understanding your oral health and having a good routine will help you achieve and maintain a healthy smile. Try integrating these tips into your [dental](#) routine:

TIPS FOR BRUSHING:

- Don't rush your brush – brush gently twice a day for two minutes, especially before bedtime
- Rinse your mouth with water after meals and snacks to reduce acid and remove food debris
- Wait 30 minutes after meals, snacks and beverages before brushing

Choose the right toothbrush

- Use a brush with soft rounded bristles, arranged at different heights
- If a power toothbrush is used, rotation/oscillation action is best

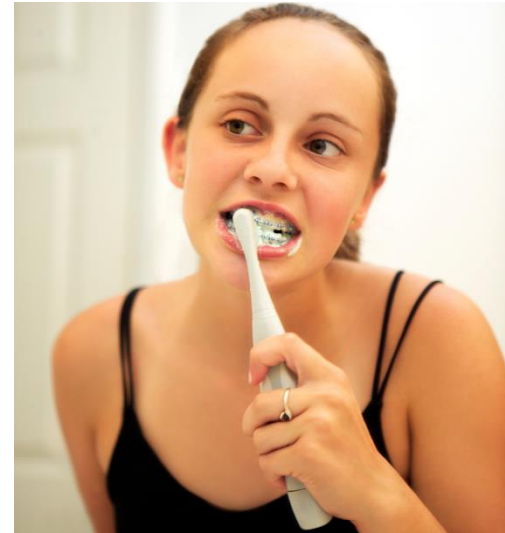
Toothpaste

- Anyone over three years of age should brush teeth with a green pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste at least twice a day
- Excess toothpaste should be spat out

TIPS FOR FLOSSING:

- [Floss daily](#) before you brush your teeth
- Flossing can take practice – keep trying. Your gums may bleed when you first begin to floss. See an oral health care provider if it continues
- Floss in the same pattern every day so no tooth is forgotten
- If needed, flosspiks or floss holders can make flossing easier

For more information, tips and details about our dental programs, please visit york.ca/HealthySchools or york.ca/Dental.



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Public Health

1-877-464-9675
TTY 1-866-512-6228
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PLAYING SPORTS? PROTECT THEIR SMILE!

Mouthguards can help prevent sudden contact between the lips, cheeks, and teeth. They are removable and made of soft plastic that usually fits the shape of the upper teeth. Using mouthguards should be encouraged while playing school, recreational, or competitive sports. This will help create a positive habit and protect teeth.

WHY USE A MOUTHGUARD?

Did you know there's a 10% chance of getting a facial injury in sports this season? Most of these injuries occur to the top front teeth and can have both physical and psychosocial impacts, including leading to pain, eating difficulties and avoiding smiling and laughing. Repairing these teeth is costly, but protection during play is inexpensive in comparison.

WHEN TO USE A MOUTHGUARD

Mouthguards are recommended for all contact sports, including basketball, baseball, soccer, hockey, football, wrestling, inline skating, skateboarding, bicycling, etc. They should be worn for all sports and games, both competitive and friendly.

TAKING CARE OF MOUTHGUARDS

- Clean after every use with toothpaste and a toothbrush or cool soapy water and rinse thoroughly
- Store in a container, but make sure the mouthguard is completely dry before closing the container
- Do not share mouthguards with others
- Replace it every two to three years, or sooner if it becomes cracked or torn
- Mouthguards may need to be replaced as the child grows



To learn more about protecting your smile, please visit york.ca/HealthySchools or york.ca/Dental.

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UNDERSTANDING GINGIVITIS

WHAT IS GINGIVITIS?

Gingivitis, also known as gum disease, is when your gums become inflamed or swollen. It's common but important to know about because, if left untreated, it can lead to more serious dental problems. The good news is that gingivitis is usually both treatable and preventable with proper care!

HOW DO YOU GET GINGIVITIS?

Gingivitis starts with plaque that, when not cleaned off the teeth, leads to inflammation of the gums. Plaque is a clear, sticky layer of germs, food debris and saliva that develops on your teeth and near the gums. It's the leading cause of gum disease and symptoms include:

- Bleeding gums, especially when you brush and floss
- Bright red or purple-red gums
- Swollen or puffy gums
- Shiny gums
- Gums are sore when they are touched
- Always having bad breath
- Loose permanent teeth
- Receding gums

Gingivitis can be controlled and sometimes even stopped or reversed by regular tooth care. However, if left untreated, it can lead to periodontal disease. Periodontal disease is a severe, chronic, contagious bacterial infection that affects gums and bone-supporting teeth. It is not reversible and can lead to tooth loss.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Floss at least once a day to remove plaque and bacteria between your teeth
2. Brush your teeth and tongue at least twice a day.
3. Check your gums regularly for sign/symptoms of gingivitis
4. Visit your oral health professional regularly, every six to nine months
5. Eat healthy foods — follow [Canada's Food Guide](#)

For more information and tips to support oral health, please visit york.ca/HealthySchools or york.ca/Dental.

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THE ORIGINAL “FLOSSING”

Long before it became a dance, flossing was introduced to remove plaque, bacteria and food debris between teeth. Flossing removes more than 1/3 of the plaque from tooth surfaces your toothbrush can't reach. Flossing daily can help to prevent gingivitis, cavities and bad breath.

When introducing flossing into, remember that it's a skill that takes practice — so keep trying! Your gums may bleed when you first begin to floss; if bleeding continues after a few days, see your oral health care provider. Don't forget that if needed, you can use flosspiks or floss holders, which can make flossing easier! If it is difficult to floss, speak to your oral health care provider for other suggestions.



FLOSSING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Take a piece of floss equal to the distance from your hand to your elbow
2. Wrap the ends of the floss around the middle fingers of each hand so that you end up with about 10 to 15 cm in between
3. Use your index fingers and thumbs to hold and control the floss
4. Slide the floss between your teeth, always staying against the side of your tooth, and move it gently under the gums.
5. Make a 'c-shape' around the tooth and wipe the tooth two or three times by moving the floss up and down — this will gently remove the plaque
6. Make sure you floss both sides of every tooth — even the backs of the last molars
7. Move to a clean section of floss as it gathers debris
8. Throw your floss in the garbage (do not flush it down the toilet)
9. Brush your teeth after flossing

You can also get visual flossing instructions from our [flossing method resource](#). For more information, tips and to learn about free dental programs, please visit york.ca/HealthySchools or york.ca/Dental.

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THINKING ABOUT ORAL PIERCINGS? KNOW THE RISKS!

Oral piercings may be trendy, but they can come with health problems that should be considered. Tongue, lips, cheeks, or other oral piercings can cause pain, swelling, infections and damage to teeth and gums. Infections can be severe, leading to symptoms like swelling, pain or discharge. There's also a chance of transmitting blood-borne diseases, such as hepatitis or HIV, due to improper sterilization of piercing tools. Other complications can include tooth fractures, speech problems, increased drooling, and allergic reactions to the metals used in jewelry. If you have certain health conditions (like epilepsy or a weakened immune system) or are taking medications such as blood thinners, the risks can be even higher.

After knowing the risks, if you decide to get an oral piercing, be a smart consumer: ensure the piercing studio is inspected by public health authorities. You can review the results of their latest inspection report at york.ca/YorkSafe. For more information on safe infection and control practices that you should be aware of before your piercing, please visit york.ca/BeSpaSafe.



Some materials are safer than others—all oral jewellery should be made of inert, non-toxic metals such as stainless steel, 14K gold, niobium or titanium. Always get aftercare instructions to help prevent complications, and never attempt to pierce yourself or let a friend do it. Don't forget some materials are safer than others—look for non-toxic options like stainless steel or titanium. Talk to a health care professional (dentist, physician, nurse) before getting an oral piercing or if you have concerns about infections.

For more information and follow-up care tips, please visit york.ca/HealthySchools or york.ca/Dental.

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