

Oral Health Resource Sheet

From www.HealthyTransitionsLA.org

Watch Your Mouth! Every Day, Twice a Day.

Oral health means the health of your mouth: teeth, gums, and tongue. A little care at home now can help you avoid tooth pain later or even prevent you from losing teeth:

- **Brush your teeth for two minutes every day, twice a day.**
Use a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste.
Gently brush your teeth in soft, small circles. Brushing too hard can hurt your gums.
Brush the inner and outer sides of your teeth — all the way to the back.
Brush the biting surfaces of your teeth.
Sweep your toothbrush from back to front on your tongue to freshen your breath.
- **Floss between your teeth every day.**
Wind about 18 inches of floss around middle fingers of both hands.
Pinch floss between thumb and index fingers, 1-2 inches of floss between your fingers.
Gently wiggle floss between teeth and curve floss in a **C** shape around a tooth.
Carefully scrape the tooth with the floss to remove bacteria plaque and bits of old food.
Repeat on both sides of each tooth.
Unwrap and rewrap floss around your fingers to keep using clean floss.
- **Avoid sugary and starchy snacks.** The bacteria that causes cavities thrives on sugar.
- **Chew sugarless gum or rinse your mouth with water after meals.** Bacteria forms acid on your teeth, the acid causes cavities. When you chew gum, your mouth creates saliva to wash away the acid. Rinsing your mouth helps the same way and clears away bits of food.
- **Wear a mouth guard to protect your teeth when you're playing sports.**
- **Don't smoke.** It's bad for your teeth and gums, too!
- **Don't pierce your lips or any part of your mouth.**

CONTACTS/LINKS

American Dental Association (ADA)

The ADA has some short videos that can show you how to take good care of your teeth and gums:

- [How to brush your teeth](#)
 - [How to floss your teeth](#)
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Teenshealth.org

This website is a source of health information that is created by health professionals for young people. These articles provide the answers to most of the questions you might have:

- [Taking Care of Your Teeth](#)
 - [Mouth and Teeth](#)
 - [What Causes Bad Breath?](#)
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Choose a Dentist and a Dental Plan.

Choosing a dentist is almost as important as choosing a doctor. It's important to trust them and feel comfortable with asking questions or for advice. If, for some reason, you want to see a different dentist, you can choose another. Before you make an appointment, ask these questions:

- Do they accept your current dental coverage?
- What services are covered and what's not covered?
- Will there be a co-pay and how much will it be?
- Where is the clinic located? Are you able to get there by public transportation, if you usually take public transit

When you are choosing a dental plan, these questions will help you to make a good decision:

- Will you be able to see the dentist you want to see?
- How far do you have to travel to see a dentist that accepts your dental plan?
- What is the monthly cost for dental coverage?
- Are you (and your children) eligible for help with the cost of going to the dentist through tax credits or cost-sharing subsidies from the federal government?
- Is there an annual (yearly) limit to what the plan will pay for your adult coverage? (There is no limit for children's coverage.)
- How much of the cost does the plan cover for regular visits that may include dental cleanings, [sealants](#), [X-rays](#), and fluoride treatments?
- How much of the cost does the plan cover for [fillings](#), [root canals](#), oral surgery (such as [extractions](#)), and treatment of [gum disease](#)?
- How much of the cost does the plan cover for major dental care (such as [crowns](#), [dentures](#), fixed [bridges](#), [implants](#) or treatment for disease of the [jaw joint](#))?
- Is there a waiting period before the plan covers certain care?
- Does the plan cover the cost of [braces](#)?
- How does the plan treat referrals to dentists who are specialists for things like root canals or gum disease treatment?

CONTACTS/LINKS

[Denti-Cal](#)

Dental services are currently provided as one of the many benefits under the Medi-Cal program. Ask your social worker about enrolling in a Denti-Cal plan.

- [Locating a Denti-Cal Dentist](#) – This search engine will help you find a dentist in your area that will accept Denti-Cal plan coverage. Before you make an appointment, call the office and ask the questions at the top of this page. Make sure you feel comfortable before you go.
- **Telephone Service Center:** (800) 322-6384, Mon.–Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Low-Cost Dental Services

[California Primary Care Association](#) has a search engine to find a clinic in your area by city or zip code. The search results will give you medical and dental low-cost clinics mixed together.
