



# Understanding Your Oral Health

Your smile is worth a thousand words and keeping it healthy is worth even more.

## Why is preventive dental care important?

- Brushing, flossing, eating a healthy diet, and seeing your dentist regularly helps to avoid dental disease.
- Routine exams and cleanings can prevent the additional cost associated with fillings, root canals, extractions, etc.

## Best practices for routine dental care from the American Dental Association<sup>1</sup>

- Brush your teeth twice a day with an ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste
- Replace your toothbrush every three or four months
- Clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner
- Eat a balanced diet, and limit soft drinks and between-meal snacks

## Did you know?

- Tobacco use causes an increased level of calculus (hardened plaque) to form on teeth, which can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.<sup>2</sup>
- Studies suggest that a diet low in fruits and vegetables may be linked to an increased risk of cancers of the oral cavity.<sup>3</sup>
- Pregnancy can increase the risk of oral health problems like cavities and gum disease. Seeing your dentist during pregnancy for a routine checkup is important for your dental health.<sup>6</sup>

**For more information and tools,  
visit MetLife's Oral Health Library at  
[oralfitnesslibrary.com](https://oralfitnesslibrary.com)**

1. American Dental Association. "Brushing Your Teeth", <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/b/brushing-your-teeth>. Accessed 01/18/2021.

2. Gum disease risk factors. American Academy of Periodontology website. <http://www.perio.org/consumer/risk-factors>. Accessed November 2020.

3. American Cancer Society, "Risk Factors for Oral Cavity and Oropharyngeal Cancers", <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/oral-cavity-and-oropharyngeal-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html> Accessed 01/20/2021.

4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Pregnancy and Oral Health", <https://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/publications/features/pregnancy-and-oral-health.html>. Accessed May 2022.