



# Oral Health Myths & Realities

Oral health plays a big role in your overall health, often reflecting what's going on in the rest of your body. There are many misconceptions regarding oral hygiene and its connection to your overall health. Here are some common myths and the truth behind them:

## Provider visits

**Myth:** As long as I visit my provider every six months, my teeth will be fine.

**Reality:** Regardless of how often you visit, you must look after your teeth. You should practice good oral hygiene, consume a healthy diet (with as little sugar as possible), and follow your provider's recommendations.

**Myth:** Everyone should have a dental check-up every six months.

**Reality:** For many people, every six months is appropriate. Some people require more frequent check-ups and others less frequent check-ups. It depends on your oral health and risk for disease. Your provider can determine how often you should visit.

**Myth:** Using a hard toothbrush will clean my teeth better than a soft toothbrush.

**Reality:** Using a hard toothbrush can result in abrasion and removal of surface area of the tooth. A soft toothbrush — used properly — will clean the teeth with less risk of enamel loss.

**Myth:** Fluoride is an artificial substance added to toothpaste and water.

**Reality:** Fluoride is a naturally occurring substance that helps protect teeth from decay by strengthening them.

## Cavities

**Myth:** I never had a cavity as a child, so I don't need to worry about getting cavities as an adult.

**Reality:** While past experience is an indicator for future cavities, many things can change your risk such as a dry mouth because of medication or a change in diet.

## Wisdom teeth

**Myth:** All wisdom teeth must be removed.

**Reality:** As long as the wisdom teeth can erupt and function correctly, they do not need to be removed.

## Genetics

**Myth:** My parents both lost their teeth by the time they were in their 50s. That means I will, too.

**Reality:** It's not inevitable. To maintain your oral health, get regular dental care, follow a healthy diet, and practice good oral hygiene.

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**Myth:** It's not possible to catch the bacteria that cause tooth decay from another person.

**Reality:** It's possible. In fact, transmission of the bacteria that cause tooth decay routinely occurs from mothers to infants.

### Food

**Myth:** It's okay to drink soda as long as it's diet soda because diet soda does not contain sugar.

**Reality:** Diet soda is highly acidic and can eat into the surface of the enamel. After that has happened, the enamel is weaker and more at risk for cavities.

### Cancer

**Myth:** Smoking cigarettes can make my teeth discolored, but that's all.

**Reality:** Smokers have more tooth decay than nonsmokers, more problems with periodontal (gum) disease, and more risk of oral cancer.

**Myth:** Spit tobacco is safer for my health than smoking because it's not inhaled and doesn't cause lung cancer.

**Reality:** Spit tobacco is a primary risk factor for oral cancer, for which the five-year relative survival rate is much lower than for breast or prostate cancer.

### Pregnancy

**Myth:** You shouldn't have any dental work done during pregnancy.

**Reality:** It's important to have regular check-ups and necessary recommended treatment during pregnancy to help prevent problems. Inform your dental professional that you are pregnant before check-ups and appointments.



For more oral health and wellness resources, visit:  
[deltadentalco.com/wellness.aspx](https://deltadentalco.com/wellness.aspx)

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