



Dental care for the elderly

The aging process means that as we age, we need to put an extra effort into maintaining good oral and dental health.

Oral Hygiene

Most of us wish to maintain good oral and dental health for as long as possible, and with good care teeth will last a lifetime. Your routines regarding diet, oral hygiene, and use of fluoride are essential to maintain good dental health.

Everyone with their own teeth should brush with fluoride toothpaste morning and night; the best times are after breakfast and before bedtime. Be systematic and make sure that spaces between teeth and the back of the teeth are also clean. Dental floss, toothpicks or interdental brushes can be good aids. Remember to brush your tongue too.

If you have a denture for all or some of your teeth, it should be removed from your mouth every night. Clean the denture once a day to avoid bacterial and fungal infections, with a suitable toothbrush (denture brush) and soap (zalo). Do not use toothpaste, as it often contains abrasives that over time can make dentures harder to keep clean.

Your dental health will determine if you need additional fluoride supplements and/or other types of aids. Talk to your dental hygienist/dentist about how to best keep your teeth clean and what kind of fluoride supplements you may need.

Diet

Eating and drinking sweet and sour food between main meals is the most common cause of tooth decay. Having 4-5 light meals is better than few and large meals. Diets that are good for your overall health are also the best for maintaining your dental health. Water is the best drink.

Illness and medication

It is very important that you let the dentist know of any medications that you use before dental treatment begins. This is especially important if you use anticoagulants and acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin) preparations. Some medications cause dry mouth as a side effect. As saliva helps to protect teeth, dry mouth will increase the risk of tooth decay. If you have this issue, your teeth should be examined by a dental hygienist/dentist more often than usual. If you need to drink or suck on lozenges between meals to prevent dry mouth, there are several sugar-free options.

Prior to all cardiac surgery and radiation therapy, it is very important that you get a complete dental health check.

There is a clear connection between the use of tobacco and various diseases of the oral cavity. If you want to stop using tobacco, ask your dental hygienist/dentist for help.

If you are taking any medication, you may be particularly prone to diseases of the teeth and gums. Always inform your dental hygienist/dentist about any medications you use and ask for advice.

Right under the Dental Health Service Act

The Dental Health Service Act gives you the right to free dental care from the public dental service if you have been living in an institution or if you have received home care for the last three months or more.

Contact your nearest public dental clinic for additional information.