

## Why You Should See Your Dentist

When you visit the dentist, you get more than clean, shiny teeth. Regular dental visits are a way to prevent dental disease and to check for signs of other diseases. If your mouth or neck do show any signs of disease, your dentist can help you get early treatment. Here's how.

### You can stop tooth decay from getting worse

- Your dentist will check for tooth decay and treat it if needed.
- Untreated tooth decay can lead to pain, loss of confidence and tooth loss.

### Almost half of adults over 30 have gum disease

- It may not hurt, and you may not even know you have it until it becomes a big problem. Gum disease is a main cause of tooth loss.
- See your dentist if you notice any changes in your mouth, such as gums that are red, swollen or tender or that bleed when you brush or floss. Your dentist can tell you if you have gum disease. He or she can also help you get your gums healthy again.

### Have whiter teeth and fresher breath

- You may be missing a few areas when you brush and floss at home.
- At your dental visit, a dentist or hygienist will clean your teeth to remove surface stains and any tartar buildup. He or she will also give you tips for cleaning your teeth and tongue at home.
- Professional dental cleanings also help prevent gum disease.

### For mouth and throat cancer screenings

- Mouth and throat cancer are deadly diseases. Almost 4 in 10 patients diagnosed with these cancers will die within five years.
- Your dentist checks your mouth and neck for signs of cancer every time you visit. Cancers that are found early can lead to better outcomes.

## The mouth can show if the body is not healthy

- Diseases that affect the entire body (such as diabetes) may first be noticed because of mouth sores, gum disease or other oral problems. Your dentist is trained to notice these symptoms.
- Your dentist will keep your general health in mind when planning your oral treatment. He or she may refer you to a physician if needed.

**Even patients with dentures** need an oral health checkup. Plus, over time, dentures can become loose because of changes in your gums and bones. Your dentist will make sure your gums are healthy, look for signs of cancer and check your dentures for proper fit.

At every exam, your dentist checks your mouth and neck for signs of disease. **Your oral health is an important part of your overall health, so visit your dentist regularly.**

---

Patient education content ©2013 American Dental Association. All rights reserved. "ADA" and the "ADA" Logo are registered trademarks of the [American Dental Association](#).