

# PLAN FOR HEALTH

## Dental and Vision Prevention October 2023

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Dental and vision care are an important component in maintaining good health. For instance, an oral exam can uncover signs of heart disease and a vision exam can detect signs of diabetes. Luckily, there are many preventative measures that can be taken to maintain or improve your oral and eye health.



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### ORAL HEALTH

If we control the amount of bacteria in our mouth, we are less likely to have bacteria spread throughout our bodies. A few daily practices can decrease the bacteria in your mouth and improve your overall health.

- **Brushing at least 2 times a day.** It is recommended to brush for 2-3 minutes and be sure you are using gentle pressure with short and precise strokes to cover all surfaces of the teeth and gum line.
- **Floss at least once a day.** Just like brushing, you should be gentle when flossing. Gently insert floss between teeth, lifting up and down in a gentle motion along the sides of the teeth. The goal is to remove food and bacteria, not to cause bleeding and inflammation.
- **Use mouthwash.** Listerine is great at killing bacteria in the mouth. Follow up your brushing routine with a mouthwash product to kill oral bacteria and reduce bad breath.

- **Eat a healthy diet.** Consuming a well-balanced diet rich in nutritious, low-sugar foods is also an important way to take care of your oral health. Many snacks and beverages that aren't good for your body are also bad for your teeth.

Practicing good oral health throughout your entire life is important. Different habits or considerations may be important at different phases of life for the best overall care.

#### Infants

- Wipe gums with a clean cloth 2x daily.
- Schedule first dental visit by first birthday.
- Once teeth come in start brushing twice a day with soft brush and water.
- Consult first with dentist regarding the use of fluoride toothpaste.

#### Kids

- Help child brush teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste until they have good brushing skills.
- Encourage pea size amount of toothpaste and avoid swallowing.
- Talk to your child's dentist about fluoride treatments.

### Pregnancy

- Pregnant women are more prone to gum disease and cavities which can affect babies' health. Pregnant women are encouraged to see a dentist before delivery (it's safe), brush twice daily, and floss.

### Adults/Older Adults

- Good oral health habits should continue well into adulthood as the oral cavity starts to naturally decline; saliva production decreases, gums become soft which increases exposure to decay causing bacteria.
- Continue to see your dentist as brushing and or flossing may become difficult related to the increase possibility of poor vision, cognitive problems, and physical limitations.

## VISION AND EYE HEALTH

If your eyes feel healthy, it is easy to assume they are healthy. However, many eye diseases don't have any symptoms or warning signs. Fortunately, there is a lot you can do to protect your vision and improve your overall eye health. Talk to your doctor or optometrist about the following recommendations.

- **Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam.** Getting a dilated eye exam is one of the best things you can do for your eye health. Along with being simple and painless, it is the only way to check for many eye diseases early on, when they are easier to treat.
- **Find out if you are at risk for eye diseases.** Age, genetics, and some chronic health conditions can increase your risk of eye disease. For example, people with diabetes are at risk for diabetic retinopathy, an eye condition that can cause vision loss and blindness.
- **Take care of your overall health.** Healthy habits like eating well and being physically active can lower your risk for diseases and conditions that lead to eye or vision problems. Smoking also increases your risk of eye disease like cataracts or macular degeneration.
- **Protect your eyes.**
  - Wear sunglasses- even on cloudy days.
  - Wear protective eyewear when playing sports or completing home repairs.
  - Give your eyes a break from technology.
  - Wash your hands before touching your eyes or contact lenses.

### Sharecare Featured Challenge:

A simple way to help slow the spread of germs in addition to immunizations, washing your hands! Join the Stop the Spread Challenge this October. Track for 21 days that you washed your hands well and often to complete the challenge!

Join the challenge by clicking **Achieve → Challenges → Stop the Spread Challenge** beginning on 9/25.

**Please note: The Sharecare Platform will be sunseting December 31, 2023.**



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