



MEDICAL CONDITIONS

DENTAL HEALTH IS ABOUT MORE THAN A NICE SMILE

Around one third of the world's population suffers from untreated tooth decay in the form of cavities, infections, abscesses, oral pain, and diseases, according to a study in the *Journal of Dental Research*.

The impact of poor oral health can have far-reaching consequences and can affect other areas of your body, for instance:

- **Gum disease** can lead to diabetes complications and an increased heart disease risk.
- **Oral bacteria** has been linked to infectious arthritis (joint inflammation caused by bacterial infection), inflammation of the inner lining of the heart and stomach ulcers.
- **Tooth loss** may lead to malnutrition due to an inability to chew.
- **Dental infections** are linked to a higher risk of pneumonia.

According to the World Dental Federation, major risk factors for oral disease include tobacco use, a high sugar diet and drinking too much alcohol. Medical conditions like diabetes, TB, bulimia, HIV & AIDS, and chronic stress can also have a negative effect on oral health.

Practising good oral hygiene

Oral diseases can be avoided by following good oral hygiene practices like regular check-ups and early treatment for any oral concerns.

Cleaning tips

- Brush your teeth twice-daily.
- Follow a healthy diet, limiting consumption of food and drinks high in sugar, particularly between meals.
- Use a soft-bristled brush - it's gentler on the gums.
- Place your brush at an angle against your teeth and use short back-and-forth motions to clean your teeth. Also clean the inside and chewing surfaces of the teeth and your tongue.
- Replace your brush every three months.
- Gently floss your teeth once a day.

Report problems

It's important to report problems with your teeth, gums or oral health as soon as you notice them. The sooner you receive the appropriate treatment, the less severe the problem is likely to become.