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For the smiles of your life.

Five Spring Cleaning Tips for a Healthy Mouth

Spring cleaning brings to mind visions of sweeping, dusting and emptying closets. But according to the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD) where Dr. Stone holds membership, it should also conjure up thoughts of evaluating your teeth cleaning routines. To help maintain top oral hygiene, we recommend that adults perform the following five habits daily:

- Use an electric toothbrush
- Floss nightly
- Brush with the right toothpaste
- Remember to use mouthwash
- Eat teeth-healthy foods

Using an electric toothbrush makes a huge difference in oral health. An electric toothbrush operates at more than 30,000 strokes per minute, while a manual toothbrush operates on average at 100 strokes per minute. Electric toothbrushes clean more effectively by pushing fluid between teeth and around the gum line. Using an electric toothbrush over time can help prevent gum inflammation, gingivitis and periodontal disease.

“We have found it best to recommend electric brushes made by Oral B and Sonicare, but we do so based on our patient’s unique oral needs as each manufacturer’s model has its own characteristics in terms of brush size and cleaning actions,” states Dr. Stone. “If you have questions about which model and brand to buy, please contact our office.”

Daily flossing, especially at night, is paramount to avoid tartar in addition to plaque, the soft deposits that can cause swollen and inflamed gums, leading to gingivitis, the earliest stage of gum disease. Half of all adults ages 30 and older have gum disease, according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC). It’s important to brush and floss every night to get rid of bacteria and go to bed with your mouth as clean as possible. Less saliva is produced to naturally clean teeth and gums while sleeping, so oral bacteria are most damaging at this time.

Choosing the right toothpaste is another important way to spring clean your mouth. “ We always recommend a fluoridated toothpaste to our patients, but each individual has their own requirements for what they expect from a toothpaste,” states Dr.Stone. “All toothpastes have features that treat different concerns and a person should choose accordingly.”

Any toothpaste that promises to "whiten" teeth should be approached with caution in that removing surface stains with a toothpaste will make the tooth appear lighter in color, but will not change its natural color. The best way to truly whiten teeth is to schedule a professional in-office whitening treatment. Our office provides [take-home whitening trays or in-office Zoom whitening](#).

Mouthwash is important for several reasons. The benefits of mouthwash include freshening one's breath, killing bacteria that may contribute to tooth decay and gum disease, and loosening debris on and between teeth. By rinsing your teeth with mouthwash, you can help inhibit plaque, which can cause cavities and gum disease. Gargling with mouthwash containing fluoride can help prevent cavities as fluoride protects the teeth from damage or decay. Rinsing for one minute, 1 – 2 times a day after brushing is ideal.

Certain “teeth-healthy” foods can help prevent dental disease as well. For example, a diet high in the amino acid arginine, found in such foods as spinach, soy products, seafood and nuts, can help prevent tooth decay. This is also true of xylitol, the all-natural sugar substitute. Kale and broccoli are high in minerals that strengthen tooth structure and prevent enamel erosion or yellowing. Onions and wasabi (a

Japanese horse radish) both contain compounds that reduce oral bacteria. And quinoa contains minerals such as calcium, magnesium and phosphorus to strengthen teeth.

By following these easy oral health spring cleaning rules, you'll not only reduce the dangers associated with oral health, but chances are you'll have cleaner, brighter, teeth to show off in the long run.