

Hot Health News

Ask Your Dental Hygienist about Proper Oral Health Care for Adolescents



Good nutrition and oral hygiene care practiced at home are particularly important during the teen-years. Proper diet, brushing, and flossing all play an important role in maintaining a healthy smile and preserving teeth during these challenging years. Cavities and periodontal (gum) disease can be a threat to teens as well as adults. Recent survey results show that bleeding gums were most prevalent among adolescents and that three-fourths of 13-17 year-olds had gums that bled.

Adolescents also have particular issues not shared by younger age groups. These concerns include: oral piercings, mouthguards, eating disorders and orthodontic care, as well as significant rates of tooth decay.

Current research suggests that the overall cavities rate is declining, yet remains highest during adolescence⁶. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends the following for treatment and prevention of adolescent caries: fluoridation, oral hygiene, diet management and sealants.

Adolescence can also be a critical period affecting an individual's periodontal status. Current data suggests that irreversible tissue damage from periodontal disease begins in late adolescence and early adulthood.

Pubertal changes characteristically affect the bone, connective tissue, and gum surrounding and supporting teeth of the young adolescent, with an increase in inflammation which is, in most cases, manageable through good oral hygiene and regular professional care⁷.

Since many oral health issues that can become serious in adulthood are preventable in adolescence, this is an ideal time to begin a dialogue with teens about the importance of regular and thorough care.

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