

The Importance of Regular Dental Visits

Source: [Oral-B](#)

How often should you go to the dentist?

Have you ever wondered why the American Dental Association and your dentist recommend you come back every six months? It's because regular dental visits are essential for the maintenance of healthy teeth and gums. And in between those examinations, it's important that you work to keep your teeth and gums clean and healthy. If you need additional help, your dentist may even suggest more frequent visits.

What goes on during a dentist visit?

Checking your teeth for tooth decay is just one part of a thorough dental examination. During your checkup appointment, your dentist (or dental hygienist) will likely evaluate the health of your gums, perform a head and neck examination (to look for anything out of the ordinary) and examine your mouth for any indications of oral cancer, diabetes or vitamin deficiencies. Don't be surprised if your dentist also examines your face, bite, saliva and movement of your lower jaw joints (TMJs). Your dentist or dental hygienist will then clean your teeth and stress the importance of you maintaining good oral hygiene at home between visits.

Many dentists will pay special attention to plaque and tartar. This is because plaque and tartar can build up in a very short time if good oral hygiene is not practiced between visits. Food, beverages and tobacco can stain teeth as well. If not removed, soft plaque can harden on the teeth and irritate the gum tissue. If not treated, plaque can lead to gum disease.

During your regularly scheduled dental appointments, your dentist will likely look at your gums, mouth, tongue and throat. There are several routine parts to a dental examination.

The head and neck examination

Your dentist will start off by:

- Examining your face
- Examining your neck
- Checking your lymph nodes
- Checking your lower jaw joints (TMJs)

The clinical dental examination

Next, your dentist assesses the state of your teeth and gums by:

- Examining the gums
- Looking for signs of gum disease
- Checking for loose teeth

- Looking at the tissues inside of your mouth
- Examining your tongue
- Checking your bite
- Looking for visual evidence of tooth decay
- Checking for broken teeth
- Checking for damaged fillings
- Looking for changes in the gums covering teeth
- Evaluating any dental appliance you have
- Checking the contact between your teeth
- Taking X-rays

The dental cleaning

During the final part of the dental visit, your dental professional cleans your mouth using these methods:

- Checking the cleanliness of your teeth and gums
- Removing any plaque and tartar
- Polishing your teeth
- Flossing between your teeth
- Reviewing recommended brushing and flossing techniques

Once your examination and cleaning have been performed, they'll tell you about the health of your teeth and gums and then make any additional recommendations. It's important that you see your dentist every six months and that they give you routine examination and cleaning. Remember, by seeing your dentist on a regular basis and following daily good oral hygiene practices at home, you are more likely to keep your teeth and gums healthy.