



# Senior Smiles

Caring for your  
smile as you age

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<sup>1</sup> "Do You Have Dry Mouth?" Journal of the American Dental Association 133 no. 10 (2002): 1455. <sup>2</sup> "Nearly 7 in 10 Americans Take Prescription Drugs, Mayo Clinic, Olmsted Medical Center Find," Mayo Clinic, web.

<sup>2</sup> "How Much Sugar is Too Much?" American Heart Association, web.



## Tips for Maintaining Healthy Smiles

With age comes wisdom. As you grow older, remember that living a healthy, active life is possible when you take care of your oral and overall health. Pairing good oral health habits at home with regular dental visits can help protect your teeth for years to come.

### Maintain a Regular Oral Health Routine

- Brush teeth twice a day and floss once a day.
- Clean your dentures daily and remove them each night.
- Visit your dentist regularly for cleanings and exams.



### Care for Dentures

- Brush daily with a soft toothbrush or denture cleaning brush.
- Use denture cleaner, hand soap, or dishwashing soap, and rinse with cool water.
- Brush gums and any remaining teeth.

Cover your dentures with water or a denture cleaning solution when you're not using them, and talk to your dentist if you notice a change in fit.



## Medical Conditions, Medications, and your Mouth

- Some medical conditions and medications can affect your oral health. Complications can include dry mouth, mouth sores, gum swelling, and bone loss. Dry mouth can also increase the risk for gum disease or tooth decay.<sup>1</sup>
- Untreated gum disease can lead to receding gums, loose teeth, and even tooth loss. It is also linked to other health issues like Alzheimer's disease, heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory problems.

For optimal health, it's important to discuss your medical conditions with your dentist.

### Work on Healthy Habits

- Drink water instead of soda or other sugary beverages.
- Read nutrition labels to check for added sugars and aim to consume no more than 25–36 grams per day.<sup>2</sup>
- Limit your tobacco and alcohol use, which can cause tooth-related problems such as an increased risk of oral cancer.

