

10 TIPS FOR A HEALTHY MOUTH

Bad teeth, receding gums and poor oral hygiene can make you look older than your age. Try these tips to get your mouth — and smile — in dazzling shape...

You put on your face cream religiously, but have you stopped to consider how your mouth can affect your look? A person's smile is one of the first things you see, and we all want to make a good impression.

But it's your gums and teeth that shape your jaw, and therefore your smile, so you need to keep them healthy to ensure you look and feel good. More seriously, poor oral hygiene can lead to gum disease, which has been linked to heart conditions — not to mention bad breath too.

But don't panic, it's never too late to start, says dental expert Dr Reena Wadia. Here she gives us her top 10 tips for a healthy, happy mouth!

1 GO ELECTRIC Invest in an electric toothbrush. They're far better at removing plaque because they're designed to gently massage teeth and gums correctly — with many now having a pressure sensor that warns you if you're pressing too hard. You need to place the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle against the spot where the gums and teeth meet. Angle upwards for the upper teeth and downwards for the lower teeth.

Spend a few seconds per tooth. For those with established gum disease, you are likely to need more than two minutes. For a



super high-tech brush, the ION-Sei electric toothbrush (£129) creates ions that suppress the bacteria that cause plaque. The Oral B electric toothbrush with a round head (£9.99) is also a winner, and more budget-friendly.

2 ALWAYS USE A TOOTHPASTE CONTAINING FLUORIDE If you have specific issues, such as tooth sensitivity, find a toothpaste which helps tackle this. Always spit and don't rinse out your mouth after using the toothpaste or it will wash away all the 'good stuff'!

3 EAT A HEALTHY, BALANCED DIET Ensure you're getting plenty of leafy greens which are high



in calcium. Foods like apples and celery also act like a toothbrush, scraping excess debris from the tooth's surface. It may be surprising, but cheese is also good for your teeth — the calcium and protein naturally help strengthen enamel. See our tips for a healthy cheeseboard, p64.



4 CLEAN BETWEEN YOUR TEETH

You wouldn't wash only one side of a dirty dish, and then put it back in the cupboard, would you? When you brush your teeth, you're only washing half of the surfaces of your teeth, front and back. You're neglecting the two sides your toothbrush doesn't touch.

Flossing or using interdental brushes helps keep these bits clean. We recommend the TePe interdental brushes, which come in various sizes. You need a snug fit, so go for the largest size that fits. If they don't fit, then dental floss is your next best option. We like Dentek Triple Clean Floss Picks.



7 DITCH THE CIGARETTES

We all know that smoking is extremely damaging to our overall health, and the effects on oral health are especially detrimental. Tobacco causes bad breath, and yellowing by staining the teeth, as well as putting you at high risk of tooth decay, gum disease and many other very serious illnesses.

8 LIMIT YOUR SUGAR INTAKE

Overindulging in sugar can lead to a number of health problems including diabetes and obesity, with the damaging effects on teeth ranging from cavities to full-on periodontitis. Natural bacteria in the mouth feed on sugar, creating acid which leads to plaque, which eats away at enamel — so go easy on the treats!



5 SEE A HYGIENIST

Ideally you should visit a hygienist every three months for a gum maintenance appointment. Investing in your gum health now will save you expensive, stressful treatment in the future. They can also give you the best advice specific to your dental needs. Visit rwperio.com for more information and advice on the best treatments.

9 CUT DOWN ON ALCOHOL

Many people aren't aware of the alarmingly high sugar content in alcoholic drinks, particularly prosecco and cocktails. Alcohol is also a dehydrant, reducing bacteria-fighting saliva in the mouth, and so creating a higher risk of disease, as well as bad breath.

6 TONGUE CLEANING

Tongue 'scraping' can be a helpful part of your oral healthcare regime. The tongue is made up of lots of little recesses, which can harbour bacteria and debris. If these are not regularly removed, a tongue coating forms which is one of the causes of bad breath.



10 DRINK TAP WATER

If you live in an area with fluoridated water, make the most of it. Fluoride helps protect the teeth against harmful bacteria and acids. Use a toothpaste that contains plenty of it if you don't.

HEALTH NEWS

QUIET YOUR THOUGHTS

A study published by the *Harvard Medical Journal* linked calmer brains with longer lives. The study showed that scheduling time for periods of slow activity — whether that be meditation, sleep or doing simple, singular tasks (rather than multitasking) — helped extend people's lifespans.



DID YOU KNOW?

DANDRUFF SOS

Dandruff is caused by a fungus and is actually linked to oily skin on the scalp — not dry skin. In a recent survey by Nizoral, 60 per cent of people said dandruff had a negative

impact on their life, yet they didn't have a true understanding of what caused their condition.

Nizoral Dandruff Shampoo, £6.39, from Boots and other leading supermarkets, has a medicated formula which treats the root cause of dandruff, and not just the symptoms.



ORANGE YOU GLAD!

» Eating an orange a day can help reduce your risk of age-related vision loss.

The Westmead Institute for Medical Research in Australia reported that people who tended to eat at least one orange daily were 60 per cent less likely to lose their vision. Talk about eye-opening!



» NEXT MONTH: Get your feet in tip-top shape