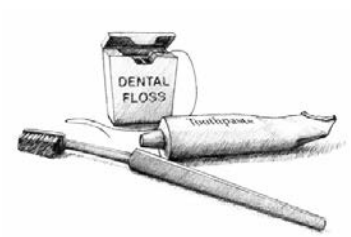
How can I keep my mouth healthy?

You can keep your mouth healthy by taking these steps:

- Keep your blood glucose numbers as close to your target as possible. Your doctor will help you set your target blood glucose numbers and teach you what to do if your numbers are too high or too low.
- Eat healthy meals and follow the meal plan that you and your doctor or dietitian have worked out.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Fluoride protects against tooth decay.
  - Aim for brushing first thing in the morning, before going to bed, and after each meal and sugary or starchy snack.
  - Use a soft toothbrush.
  - Gently brush your teeth with the toothbrush angled towards the gum line.
  - Use small, circular motions.



- Brush the front, back, and top of each tooth. Brush your tongue, too.
- Change your toothbrush every 3 months or sooner if the toothbrush looks worn or the bristles spread out. A new toothbrush removes more plaque.

- Drink water that contains added fluoride or ask your dentist about using a fluoride mouth rinse to prevent tooth decay.
- Ask your dentist about using an anti-plaque or anti-gingivitis mouth rinse to control plaque or prevent gum disease.
- Use dental floss to clean between your teeth at least once a day. Flossing helps prevent plaque from building up on your teeth. When flossing,
  - slide the floss up and down and then curve it around the base of each tooth under the gums
  - use clean sections of floss as you move from tooth to tooth

- Another way of removing plaque between teeth is to use a dental pick or brush—thin tools designed to clean between the teeth. You can buy these picks at drug stores or grocery stores.
- If you wear dentures, keep them clean and take them out at night. Have them adjusted if they become loose or uncomfortable.
- Call your dentist right away if you have any symptoms of mouth problems.
- See your dentist twice a year for a cleaning and checkup. Your dentist may suggest more visits if you need them.

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- Follow your dentist's advice.
  - If your dentist tells you about a problem, take care of it right away.
  - Follow any steps or treatments from your dentist to keep your mouth healthy.
- Tell your dentist that you have diabetes.
  - Tell your dentist about any changes in your health or medicines.
  - Share the results of some of your diabetes blood tests, such as the A1C test or the fasting blood glucose test.
  - Ask if you need antibiotics before and after dental treatment if your diabetes is uncontrolled.
- If you smoke, stop smoking.