



DENTAL EXAMS FOR SENIORS

Diet and exercise play an important part in keeping us healthy, particularly in our senior years.

To keep your mouth healthy, practise good oral hygiene, eat a well-balanced diet, check your mouth for warning signs of gum disease, don't smoke or chew tobacco and, most importantly, have your mouth examined regularly by your dentist.

All of us need regular dental exams, even if you have dental implants or wear dentures. Regular dental visits help to catch small problems before they become serious and more costly.

THE DENTAL EXAM

A dental exam is a thorough examination of your teeth, gums and mouth by your dentist. Usually the dental exam includes some or all of the following:

1. MEDICAL HISTORY UPDATE

It is important to tell your dentist about your general health. Let your dentist know if you:

- Smoke
- Have any allergies
- Wear a medical device like a pacemaker
- Are taking any over-the-counter, prescription or herbal medications. If so, give your dentist a list of your medications and dosage information
- Have changed medication since your last dental exam
- Are being treated for a health problem or a medical condition
- Have any changes in your general health
- Have had surgery

2. DENTAL HISTORY UPDATE

During the dental exam, tell your dentist about any problems or changes you have with your teeth, gums or mouth. Tell your dentist if:

- Your teeth are loose, have changed colour or have moved
- Your teeth or gums are more sensitive to heat, cold or sweets
- Your gums have changed colour, they are tender or bleed when you brush or floss
- Floss catches on rough edges of your teeth
- The inside of your cheek has changed colour
- You are clenching or grinding your teeth
- You are nervous about visiting the dentist

3. DENTAL EXAM AND TREATMENT

During the dental exam your dentist looks for gum disease, cavities, loose fillings, broken teeth, infection, early signs of oral cancer, and signs of other problems that could affect your general health. Many small problems can be caught and treated right away.

4. CONSULTATION AND ADVICE

At this point, your dentist may discuss any concerns that he or she may have with your oral health and an appropriate treatment plan. This is also a good time for you to ask any questions.

5. CLEANING

A professional cleaning is the only way to remove tartar and plaque buildup from teeth. If not removed, this buildup can eventually lead to gum disease. The main steps in a cleaning are scaling and polishing. Scaling removes tartar and plaque buildup from teeth. Polishing smoothes and cleans the surfaces of the teeth.

6. MAINTENANCE

If you have a bridge, dentures or implants, the dental exam is a good opportunity to make sure they are fitting properly and are in good shape. Regular visits to your dentist help to keep your mouth healthy.

Canadians of all ages can enjoy good oral health and benefit from regular dental visits. If you look after your teeth and gums they will look good and stay healthy for life.

