

JANUARY

# New year, better habits

## Better oral habits: What you should know



Start this year off with a few habits that are simple to stick with. We think you'll find that these small changes really add up over time.

### Replace your toothbrush every 3–4 months

New year. New you. New toothbrush. It's important because over time, bristles become frayed and less effective at cleaning your teeth.<sup>1</sup>

### Brush twice a day for two minutes

Following the American Dental Association's guidelines helps reduce cavity-causing plaque and lowers your risk of gum disease.

Most people only brush for about 45 seconds. But by brushing for a full two minutes, you can remove up to 26% more plaque.<sup>2</sup>

### Floss once a day

Flossing is an important way to reduce your risk of gum disease (periodontitis).

**Pro tip:** Floss before you brush so you can remove any food, bacteria and plaque and then effectively clear it away.<sup>3</sup>

### Get at least two dental check-ups this year

There's a reason your plan covers two annual dental check-ups. By getting regular cleanings and X-rays, you can help keep your mouth healthy and catch any problems while they're still small.

### Reduce sugars

Every time you eat or drink something sugary, your mouth creates acid that can lead to tooth decay,<sup>4</sup> so try to cut down on sugary foods and beverages. Or at least have them at the same time as a meal so there's more saliva to reduce the effect of the acid.<sup>5</sup>



Start off the year right by scheduling a check-up today

Find nearby in-network dentists, quality ratings and more at [myCigna.com](https://mycigna.com) or the [myCigna App](#).

1. "New Year, Healthier Mouth." Mouth Healthy, American Dental Association, 2020, [www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/h/holiday-ideas](http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/h/holiday-ideas). 2. Raypole, Crystal. 5 Toothbrushing FAQs. 1 Apr. 2019, [www.healthline.com/health/how-long-should-you-brush-your-teeth-2](http://www.healthline.com/health/how-long-should-you-brush-your-teeth-2). 3. Higuera, Valencia. Is It Best to Floss Before or After Brushing Your Teeth? 16 Dec. 2019, [www.healthline.com/health/dental-and-oral-health/floss-before-or-after-brushing](http://www.healthline.com/health/dental-and-oral-health/floss-before-or-after-brushing). 4. Lin, Steve. The Effects of Snacking on Your Teeth. Verywell Health, 23 Oct. 2020, [www.verywellhealth.com/is-your-snacking-habit-bad-for-your-teeth-3866373](http://www.verywellhealth.com/is-your-snacking-habit-bad-for-your-teeth-3866373). 5. Foley, Maryann, et al. The Best and Worst Foods for Your Teeth, University of Rochester Medical Center, [www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?contenttypeid=1&contentid=4062](http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?contenttypeid=1&contentid=4062).

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