

# StoneRock's Top 10 Tips for a Healthy Mouth

**1 BRUSH YOUR TEETH.** Not a surprising one this one, but still probably the best way of reducing your dental bills. Using any form of tooth brush – manual, electric or sonic twice a day for at least 2 minutes with a fluoride tooth paste reduces plaque build up and strengthens enamel. There really is no substitute for it.



**2 BRUSH IN BETWEEN YOUR TEETH.** Once you have used your tooth brush the job is only half done! The majority of decay and gum disease in adult mouths occurs in between our teeth. The tooth brush cannot touch these sites. Floss will do a reasonable job between unfilled front teeth but is very tricky to use effectively at the back of the mouth. By far the best way of cleaning between the teeth is with specially designed brushes, such as the Tepe range.



**3 BRUSH YOUR TONGUE.** The best way to combat bad breath is to clean the tongue every week with a Tongue Scrape. The majority of bad breath is caused by substances called "Volatile Sulphurous Compounds" and these are very commonly found on the surface of the tongue. A Tongue Scrape removes the build up of white matter from the tongue and shifts the smelly bits with it.



**4 REDUCE THE NUMBER OF SUGAR HITS EVERY DAY.** A sugar hit is defined as any food and drink containing non-milk extrinsic sugars. In other words anything other than milk, water and any sugar free products. As a rough figure the mouth can tolerate 4-6 hits a day. This includes all meals and drinks. If we have three meals and a couple of drinks in between meals then that is about all the teeth can take. Once we start snacking throughout the day, especially on refined carbohydrates then decay can begin to form. Cutting out in between meal sugar hits is an excellent way of reducing the likelihood of decay.



**5 DON'T SMOKE!** Smoking has a massive affect on the health of the mouth. In individuals who are susceptible to gum disease it can increase the severity of the disease by a whopping 700%. It also dries the mouth so increasing the risk of tooth decay. Saliva is the mouth's antiseptic and it helps reverse the affects of decay. In a dry mouth there is less saliva and so more decay. Smoking is also the number one cause of oral cancer, which unfortunately still kills 2000 a year in the UK alone.



**6 AVOID HEAVY SPIRITS.** Heavy spirit drinking in excess of 20 units per week is also linked with an increased risk of oral



cancer. The affect of this is increased greatly in the presence of smoking.

**7 DRINK PLENTY OF WATER.** The majority of us don't drink enough! We produce, on average, 1.5 litres of saliva a day and this needs to be replaced. The average sized adult should really be drinking 2 litres of water a day to keep us adequately hydrated. If we become under hydrated the body stops saliva production to preserve water for life sustaining functions. Again a dry mouth is much more likely to decay.



**8 USE A RINSE OR PASTE TO HELP REMINERALISE THE TEETH.** An alcohol free, neutral pH mouth rinse containing Fluoride is often helpful for individuals at a higher risk of decay or who cannot fully clean all of their mouth. We now also have pastes such as Tooth Mousse and MI Paste that contain bioactive calcium and phosphate as well as fluoride. These pastes are spread over the teeth after all brushing is complete and are left in place over night to help reverse the damage of the day. These are especially useful for elderly patients who may be experiencing a dry mouth and difficulty in cleaning.



**9 ESTABLISH A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH A DENTAL HYGIENIST.** At StoneRock once we have worked to get a mouth healthy we would like our patients to spend 99% of the time with the hygienist and 1% of the time with the dentist. A good hygienist will be an educator, a motivator, a demonstrator, a helper but should not just be a cleaner. A really good visit to the hygienist is one where they can assess the health of the mouth, highlight areas that need extra work, demonstrate how to improve these sites and then perform the small amount of cleaning that is needed.



**10 WORK WITH A DENTIST IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE HYGIENIST TO RESTORE THE MOUTH TO FULL FUNCTION.** We need to remember that tooth ache is a hopeless early warning system. The absence of pain does not equate to the absence of problems. Teeth and gums can deteriorate to a terrible state before they hurt and once they do hurt they are often beyond repair. Establishing a working relationship with a dentist you trust will allow you to make the necessary decisions to treat your teeth and gums in a way that keeps them healthy, pain free and looking great for the whole of your life; and that has got to be worth it!

