



# Ask

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OFFICER



## TAKING CARE OF YOUR TEETH & MOUTH



# EVERCARE

[www.EverCare.org](http://www.EverCare.org)  
845.569.0500

*Besides a BIG BRIGHT SMILE...*

*...healthy teeth and gums make it easy for you  
to eat well and enjoy food!*

## TOOTH DECAY

Brushing and flossing may reduce plaque and decay, but once a cavity forms, a dentist must fix it.

Fluoride toothpaste helps protect against decay, but if you are at a higher risk (for example, dry mouth from certain medications or medical conditions), you may need additional fluoride treatments. Your dentist or hygienist may give you fluoride treatments, or tell you to use a fluoride mouth rinse at home.

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## GUM DISEASE

If plaque builds up under your gumline, your gums may be tender and bleed. This is an infection called “gingivitis” and may be reduced by brushing and flossing every day. If gingivitis becomes severe, a dentist must become involved to prevent damage to adjacent bones, gums and other tissues.

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## HOW TO CLEAN YOUR TEETH & GUMS

### BE GENTLE:

1. Use a soft toothbrush (electric/battery-operated may be helpful for arthritis, but is not necessary).
2. Brush slowly in circular motions.
3. Lightly brush your tongue.
4. Floss once a day (*if excessive bleeding, see your dentist*).

## DENTURE CARE

- Keep your dentures clean.
- Avoid foods that are “sticky,” stain, cause bad breath, or cause swollen gums.
- Brush your dentures every day with a denture-care product.
- At bedtime, remove your dentures; soak them in water or a denture-cleansing product.
- In time, your dentures may change shape and be uncomfortable; your dentist may need to adjust or replace them.

## DRY MOUTH

- “Dry Mouth,” a common condition, may make it hard to eat, swallow, taste, and speak.
- Causes, besides age alone, include tooth decay, infections of the mouth, or various medications.
- Treatment includes sipping water, not smoking, or reducing alcohol and caffeine. Your dentist or doctor may suggest artificial saliva.

## ORAL CANCER

- Cancer of the mouth is more likely to happen in elderly people.
- Since pain is usually not an early symptom, a routine dental checkup is a good time for an oral cancer screen.
- Lower your risk by not using ANY tobacco product, reducing alcohol, and using lip balm with sunscreen.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**American Dental Association:**  
1-800-621-8099; [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)

**National Institute on Aging Information Center:**  
1-800-222-2225; [www.nia.nih.gov](http://www.nia.nih.gov) or  
[www.nia.nih.gov/espanol](http://www.nia.nih.gov/espanol)



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