

# DENTAL HEALTH

## Six Amazing Secrets Behind Your Smile ®

(NAPSA)—Each smile is unique. What does yours say about you?

### **Your Teeth Tell Your Story**

Scientists can learn a great deal about people based on their teeth. Teeth can reveal people's age, diet and where they live. Teeth can also display signs of stress or illness, providing researchers with a detailed history of a person's life and health.

### **Teeth Mark Your Individuality**

Your teeth are as unique as your fingerprints. No two teeth—even two teeth in the same person's mouth—are the same. Each of your 20 baby teeth and 32 permanent teeth has its own profile and varies in shape and size.

### **They've Been With You Since Birth**

Your teeth were always there—even if no one could see them at first. You are born with the crowns of your baby teeth beneath your gums. These teeth make their entrance when you're 3 to 6 months old. The crowns and roots of your permanent teeth form beneath your baby teeth, eventually pushing them out of the way and triggering a visit from the Tooth Fairy.

### **Teeth Survive Long After Death**

The enamel on teeth is stronger than any other part of the body—so strong that it can remain intact for hundreds

of years after someone dies. Studying the teeth of human ancestors has taught scientists some fascinating things about history. For example, studies of dental remains have found evidence that the first travelers to leave Africa for China set out about 80,000 years ago and that early humans used a simple form of aspirin for pain relief. Even the toughest substance in the body needs regular care, however.

### **Your Teeth Are Tough, But They Need Your Help**

There are more than 300 different types of cavity-causing bacteria. They feed on leftover sugar in your mouth, creating acids that leave small holes in your teeth. Protect your teeth by brushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, cleaning between your teeth once a day, and eating a healthy diet that limits sugary drinks.

### **Who Cares About Your Teeth?**

Your dentist does. In addition to daily home care, your teeth need regular dental cleanings and checkups. Visit <https://findadentist.ada.org> for a nearby American Dental Association dentist who will work with you to help protect one of your most unique features—your smile.