

Health Awareness

Take Care Of Your Health By Taking Care Of Your Mouth

(NAPSA)—The next time you visit the dentist, give yourself a pat on the back. Taking care of your mouth is vitally important to your overall well-being and may lower your risk for other health problems.

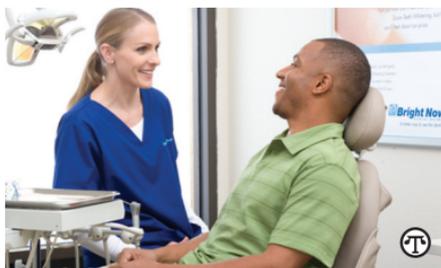
For example, periodontal disease has been linked to endocarditis (an infection of the heart lining). Bacteria from plaque can make your gums red and swollen, and bleed when you brush. The bacteria can then enter your bloodstream and infect other parts of the body, including the inner lining of your heart—particularly if you're already at high risk for a heart condition.

Studies have also linked poor oral health to elevated levels of C-reactive protein that can lead to diabetes, stroke, heart disease, osteoporosis and other inflammatory diseases of aging.

Keep your oral health on track by brushing twice daily, flossing, changing your toothbrush every three to four months and eating healthy. Plan visits to your dentist every six months. The experts at Smile Brands Inc. suggest asking your dentist three questions:

What Should I Do About That Pain In My...?

If you are having any pain, ask about it. Your dentist will be able to point out anything on the surface during a regular cleaning and checkup, but you'll need to speak up if you're feeling something not visible. Identifying a concern when it's small can prevent a



Ask your dentist for some take-home to-dos.

larger problem in the future, and also keep any potential infections from spreading to other parts of your body.

How Is Everything Besides My Teeth?

Ask about your gums. Plaque buildup on your teeth can lead to problems like gingivitis and periodontitis. You can also ask for an overall exam to look for issues like bone density, grinding your teeth or any lumps that are out of the ordinary.

What's My Homework?

To keep that clean-teeth feeling after you leave the office, ask your dental professional for some take-home to-dos. This could be a new brushing technique or a sample you've seen advertised. Such "assignments" can help keep your mouth in the best possible shape.

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