



Start the year strong with better habits

Better oral habits: What you should know



Start this year off with a few habits that are simple to stick with. These small changes really add up over time.

Replace your toothbrush every three to four months

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

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.²

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.³

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,⁴ 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.⁵



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 on the **myCigna® App**.

1. American Dental Association (ADA). "New Year, Healthier Mouth." Mouth Healthy. www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/h/holiday-ideas. 2. Raypole, Crystal. (2018, April 1). "5 Toothbrushing FAQs." Healthline. www.healthline.com/health/how-long-should-you-brush-your-teeth-2. 3. Higuera, Valencia. (2019, December 16). "Is It Best to Floss Before or After Brushing Your Teeth?" Healthline. www.healthline.com/health/dental-and-oral-health/floss-before-or-after-brushing. 4. ADA. "6 Ways to Reduce Your Child's Sugary Snacking." Mouth Healthy. <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/nutrition/child-snacking-tips>. 5. University of Rochester Medical Center. "The Best and Worst Foods for Your Teeth." www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?contenttypeid=1&contentid=4062.

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