

Think Mouth, Think Health

Singapore – Keeping your mouth healthy is crucial for maintaining your general health and well-being. A healthy mouth enables people to speak, smile, eat, swallow and perform other physical functions throughout life as well as enhances social interaction and promotes self-esteem.

Good tongue health is also fundamental to good overall health. It is important to note that healthy tongue function in the mouth can help to facilitate improved breathing in both children and adults, especially during sleep. Keep your tongue up against the palate when resting, swallowing and breathing to train good tongue strength.

Here's everything you need to know about oral health and how to prevent the risk of oral diseases.

Oral Health & General Health: Key Facts

-  **Oral diseases are associated with a number of other noncommunicable diseases (NCDs)**, such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and gastrointestinal and pancreatic cancers¹.
-  **An examination of the mouth** can reveal initial signs of systemic disease, nutritional deficiencies, and unhealthy habits such as tobacco or alcohol use².
-  **Risk factors for oral diseases include an unhealthy diet** – particularly one rich in sugars – tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol and poor oral hygiene³.

Practice Good Oral Care

The most common type of oral disease is tooth decay and gum disease. If not properly managed, they can negatively impact the rest of your body. It's important to recognize that you can help prevent oral diseases, as well as other health conditions, by taking charge of your oral health. Forming right habits from an early age is crucial for good oral health.

-  Consume a healthy diet with more natural foods and avoid high sugar intake to prevent tooth decay.
-  Brush your teeth for two minutes, twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
-  Visit a dentist at least once a year, and seek advice if you see signs of bad oral health.
-  Refrain from breathing through your mouth as it increases risk of tooth decay.
-  Drink alcohol in moderation, and avoid tobacco use for good oral health.
-  After a meal, wait at least 30 minutes before brushing to better protect your teeth.
-  Wear a mouthguard when engaging in contact sports to minimize injuries, especially to the front teeth.
-  Avoid rinsing with water straight after brushing; spit out excess toothpaste to maximize the protective effects of fluoride.

¹ Think Mouth Think Health: Advocacy Toolkit available at: http://www.worldoralhealthday.org/sites/default/files/assets/2018_WOHD-toolkit-advocacy-EN.pdf

² The Challenge of Oral Disease – A call for global action. The Oral Health Atlas. 2nd ed. Geneva. FDI World Dental Federation, 2015 (<http://www.fdiworldental.org/publications/oral-health-atlas/oral-healthatlas>)

³ Think Mouth Think Health: Advocacy Toolkit available at: http://www.worldoralhealthday.org/sites/default/files/assets/2018_WOHD-toolkit-advocacy-EN.pdf