

Regular dentist visits help keep you healthy and avoid emergencies

Why preventive dental care matters



Taking care of your teeth is about more than your oral health: It's an important part of your overall well-being. Turning to your dentist for routine care — and when you need help right away — is a smarter way to stay healthy, and it can save you money, too.

Why you should see a dentist regularly

Even if you're not having problems with your teeth, it's important to make time for regular dental care. You should see your dentist for preventive care at least twice a year. These visits can help:

- **Catch oral problems early.** Your dentist can spot issues like gum disease or cavities early, before they become difficult and more costly to treat.
- **Catch other problems before your primary care doctor.** Many non-oral chronic diseases or illnesses like diabetes, cancer, or heart disease may first show symptoms in the mouth, head, or neck. When you routinely see your dentist, they can spot changes in your mouth which may be linked to your overall health. When you catch problems early, they may be easier and less costly to treat.
- **Improve your whole-body health.** Infections and conditions in your mouth like cavities, severe gum disease, and tooth loss can affect your overall health and quality of life. Seeing a dentist regularly can help.

Visit [mouthhealthy.org](https://www.mouthhealthy.org) to learn more about why regular dental care is important.



Many dentists offer urgent care

Ask your dentist how they handle urgent dental needs. Dental offices often have a phone number on their after-hours recordings to call in situations that require immediate care. You might be treated by your dentist, a colleague, or receive a referral to a trusted partner that specializes in critical, time-sensitive dental care.

If your dentist or a trusted partner is not available, teledentistry might be an option. Virtual dentists can provide a personalized treatment plan or write prescriptions for issues like toothaches, gum infections, or bleeding.

Going to the emergency room (ER) or calling 911 is always your best option for emergencies. If you believe you are having a life-threatening emergency or your health is in serious jeopardy, call 911 immediately.

Do you need help finding a dentist?

Here are three ways to find a dentist that's right for you.

1

If you're an Anthem member, use the Find Care tool on [anthem.com/ca](https://www.anthem.com/ca) or in the SydneySM Health app to connect with a dentist in your plan's network.

2

Use the American Dental Association's Find-A-Dentist tool at [findadentist.ada.org](https://www.findadentist.ada.org) to connect with a dentist near you.*

3

Ask your primary care doctor, pharmacist, or trusted family and friends for recommendations.*

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* Always check first to make sure your dentist or care provider is in your plan's network. If you use a dentist that is not in your plan's network, you may have to pay more out of pocket.

Sources: American Dental Association website: [ADA.org](https://www.ada.org), Mouth Healthy website: [mouthhealthy.org](https://www.mouthhealthy.org), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov), WebMD website: [webmd.com](https://www.webmd.com).

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