

FOR USE IN WEEK STARTING

April 18, 2011

<h1>Ask Dr.</h1>
(photo) By _____

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GENERAL MOUTH CARE TIPS

Q: Do you have any general advice for keeping a healthy smile?

A: Sure. There are plenty of specific dental issues we've talked about, but here are some overall things to keep in mind: Brush and floss every day, especially after meals. If it's impractical to brush after a meal, at least rinse your mouth with water to flush out any particles of food left. Use good quality, shred-resistant floss so it doesn't bunch up between your teeth and do any damage. Use toothpaste that contains fluoride. Not all do.

Visit your dentist regularly, at least twice a year, for a checkup and a professional cleaning. Watch your diet. High-fiber greens like lettuce, broccoli and spinach can contribute to whiter teeth. Apples, oranges, celery and carrots are also good for your smile because they require lots of chewing, which, in turn, generates saliva and keeps bacteria from setting up camp on your teeth.

Stay away from sugary foods and drinks. When the bacteria that live in plaque, the filmy substance on your teeth, interact with sugar they produce the acid that can start the process of tooth decay. Your dentist is a resource for information on how to keep your mouth fresh and healthy. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

Presented as a service to the community by

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