



Oral Health

Oral health problems can significantly impact your ability to chew, swallow, and take medications, affecting your overall health and quality of life. If we brush, floss, and practice proper nutrition, along with going to our dentist, we can avoid oral health issues! If eating problems persist, consulting a registered dietitian might be necessary.



APLA's Dental Health Program

APLA's dental program is open to LA County residents living with HIV. Accepts PPO insurance and offers sliding scale fees for the uninsured. Contact **(213) 201-1388**.

Common Oral Health Problems Diagnosed in People with HIV/AIDS:

- **Candidiasis (thrush):** Fungal infection, cottage cheese-like bumps on tongue, gums, and cheeks. More common with CD4 count 500-200 cells/mm³, risk increases with lower count.
- **Oral warts:** Caused by Human Papilloma Virus, cauliflower-like bumps inside mouth on cheeks, gums, and lips. More common with CD4 count 300 cells/mm³ or less.
- **Dry mouth:** Often caused by certain medications, leads to dental cavities due to reduced saliva and increased bacterial growth.



Visit Your Dentist!

Regular dentist visits can detect **dental caries**, **gingivitis** (*mild gum inflammation from plaque*), and **periodontitis** (*severe infection causing bone loss*). Dentists can diagnose and treat several oral infections. They may also identify conditions needing medical attention and refer you to a physician.

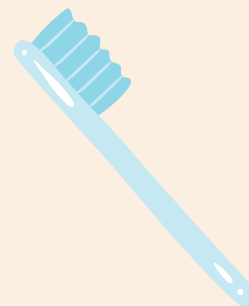


Prevent Dry Mouth

1. Quit smoking!
2. Brush at least twice a day or after meals to prevent cavities and stimulate saliva production.
3. Ask your dentist about prescription toothpaste, alcohol-free mouthwash, or saliva substitutes like **Biotene**, **Salagen**, or **Salivart** for dry mouth.
4. Chew sugarless gum or suck on sugarless candies to increase saliva.
5. Use a humidifier at night.
6. Carry water and drink throughout the day.

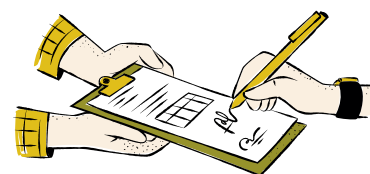
Nutrition For Dry Mouth: Chewing, and Swallowing Issues

1. Drink 8-10 small glasses of water daily.
2. Limit caffeinated or alcoholic drinks as they can worsen dry mouth.
3. Opt for soft, easy-to-chew foods like shakes, cream soups, hot cereals, yogurt, and mashed potatoes.
4. Eat foods at moderate temperatures, avoiding extremes of hot or cold.
5. Skip spicy, salty, or crunchy foods if they cause discomfort.



Tips for healthy teeth:

1. Choose a well-balanced diet to build strong teeth.
2. Eat healthy snacks like fruits, vegetables, low-fat cheese, and nuts instead of sugary foods such as cake, cookies, candies, sodas, and sweetened drinks.
3. After eating chewy sugary foods that stick to teeth (licorice, gum drops, etc.), remember to brush your teeth!
4. Consume calcium-rich foods daily for strong teeth, like milk, yogurt, soy milk, ricotta cheese, spinach, and bok choy.
5. Cheese and nuts make excellent low-sugar snacks!




Tips for a healthy mouth:

1. Brush after meals and snacks.
2. Floss daily and keep it on the bathroom counter as a reminder.
3. Drink water to wash away food from teeth.
4. Opt for non-sugary snacks.
5. Visit your dentist twice a year.

For more information or fact sheets contact:

 Ehlana Nelson, MS, RD

 213.201.1556

 enelson@aplahealth.org or aplahealth.org