

# Dental Checkups: Why, When, and How

Going to the dentist twice a year keeps your smile bright and healthy and prevents costly health problems.

## Dentists help promote

- healthy teeth and bones
- nutritional health
- a healthy heart

## Dentists help prevent

- bad breath
- tooth loss
- gum disease



## What to Expect at Your First Dental Visit

### WHO WILL YOU SEE AT YOUR VISIT?

The office receptionist, then the dental hygienist and the dentist

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT YOUR VISIT?

The dental hygienist will talk with you about your teeth and mouth (oral health) and about your general health.

### X-RAYS

Pictures of your teeth and jaw will be taken while you are standing and seated.

### CLEANING AND FLUORIDE

The hygienist will brush and floss your teeth, gently remove sticky plaque and bacteria with special tools, ask you to rinse your mouth with water, and may put a protective gel on your teeth for a few minutes.

### FIX-UPS AND FOLLOW-UP

The dentist will examine your teeth and fix any serious or urgent problems. The staff will discuss dental care at home and schedule your next appointment.



## How to Schedule a Dental Appointment

1. Find Safety Net dental clinics here: [www.oralhealthkansas.org/SafetyNet.html](http://www.oralhealthkansas.org/SafetyNet.html)
2. Find a dentist that accepts KanCare here: [www.oralhealthkansas.org/KanCare.html](http://www.oralhealthkansas.org/KanCare.html)
3. Call the phone number for the clinic you select and tell scheduler if you prefer a certain day of the week, date, or time for your appointment (initial appointments last about one hour).
4. Have your calendar and any insurance cards or documents in hand during the call.

### WHEN SHOULD YOU GO TO THE DENTIST?

Anytime you have an urgent dental problem and for a dental check-up every 6 months. Please arrive 20 minutes before your appointment time. We look forward to your visit!

## Dental Health at Home



### EAT HEALTHY FOOD

Avoid sugary foods and drinks. Sugar feeds germs and creates acid that harms your teeth. Crisp vegetables and fruits (like fresh carrots or apples) and calcium-rich foods (like almonds, milk or yogurt) will keep your teeth healthy and strong.

### AVOID SNACKING

After eating or snacking, food and germs cause acid that attacks teeth. Snacking without brushing your teeth increases food and acid left on teeth. Three meals a day and fresh fruit or vegetable snacks, followed by brushing, reduces acid.

### PREVENT ORAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Chew sugar-free gum or xylitol gum to help make teeth strong and stop decay. Avoid tobacco and betel nut; they stain your teeth and contain ingredients that can lead to oral (mouth) cancer.

### BRUSH TWICE A DAY AND FLOSS ONCE A DAY

Use a toothbrush with toothpaste to clean all parts of your teeth. Use floss to clean between your teeth.

