

How can cavities be prevented?

There is no absolute way to prevent cavities, but by practicing good dental hygiene habits people can reduce their likelihood of developing cavities.

Dental health experts have the following recommendations for how people can best prevent cavities:

- Brush your teeth. Experts advise people to brush their teeth after every meal. At the very least it is advised that people brush their teeth twice each day, usually once in the morning after the first meal of the day and once at night before falling asleep.
- Spend two to three minutes brushing, and be sure to brush every tooth.
- Make sure to brush along the gum line (the area where teeth meet the gums).
- Use toothpaste that contains fluoride.
- Floss between teeth at least once each day to help minimize plaque build-up.
- Minimize consumption of foods and drinks that contain a lot of sugar. These include candy and sugary soda drinks. If you have these foods, try to brush or clean your teeth immediately afterwards so residual sugars are not sitting in your mouth for a long period of time.
- Visit a dentist two times each year for a check-up and professional cleaning.
- Rinse your mouth with saltwater or an antibacterial mouthwash.

Some content on this page was gathered from the website for the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, one of the National Institutes of Health. The website is located at www.nidcr.nih.gov. Other content was gathered from documents found on the website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The website is located at www.cdc.gov.

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