

Health In Progress

Lesson 18

Dental Hygiene



QUESTION 18:

According to the American Dental Association, it is best to brush your teeth:

- a. once a day
- b. twice a day
- c. it doesn't matter

ANSWER: b. twice a day

1. **Brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.** Floss every day. Brushing and flossing will break up the bacteria and sugar team so they cannot attack your teeth and fluoride in toothpaste strengthens the tooth enamel and makes teeth less likely to decay.
2. **Healthy teeth are part of being in top physical shape.** Did you know that the United States Olympics Team has a program to assist athletes in keeping their mouths healthy? An athlete with a dental problem may not play well for the team.

It is important to **visit a dentist 1 - 2 times a year.** It is important that a dentist remove cavity causing plaque and stops existing cavities from decaying further. If you have a cavity, the dentist must remove the decay and place a "filling." If not treated by a dentist, decay can spread through the tooth.

3. **What are some other ways we can protect our teeth?**
 - a. If a tooth is broken or loose, see the dentist immediately. If a tooth is knocked out, find it but don't clean it. Put it in a cup of milk, and get to the dentist right away.
 - b. Wear a mouth guard when playing sports.
 - c. Don't chew pencils or similar objects, or hold them in your mouth.
 - d. Don't smoke or use smokeless tobacco.
 - e. Cut down on snacks. The more often you eat snacks, the more "acid attacks" you have. Choose nutritious snacks like fresh vegetables, fruit, or cheese. When you eat sugary or starchy (such as bread) foods, the bacteria in plaque makes acid. This "acid attack" lasts 20 minutes.