

Tooth Or Dare

Dental Lies & Myths Exposed



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Introduction

We use our teeth every day. They allow us to chew our food. They're largely responsible for our smiles, too. Without strong, healthy teeth, life is much harder.

Protecting your teeth and gums is essential. It's why you visit the dentist every six months and why you brush and floss regularly.

We all want to take good care of our teeth. After all, you only get one set of adult teeth, so it's important to protect and care for them properly.

The problem is that there are so many myths surrounding oral care. Some of them might just mean your teeth don't get as clean as they could, but others can cause lasting damage that harms your smile!

In this eBook, we'll break down 15 of the most damaging oral health myths and reveal the truths behind them. Taking good care of your teeth and gums doesn't have to be a challenge. You just need factual information so you can break bad habits and avoid things that cause damage.

Myth 1

BRUSHING HARDER CLEANS YOUR TEETH BETTER

This is one of the most prevalent myths out there. It's easy to see how it got started, too. After all, removing stains from dishes or other hard surfaces usually requires a little elbow grease, right?

It seems to make sense that the same concept would apply to your teeth. The harder you brush, the cleaner your teeth will be because you're better able to remove staining and discoloration.

Stop right there! If you're scrubbing your teeth instead of gently brushing them, you're causing serious damage to your enamel and your gums.



Hard brushing can destroy the thin coating of enamel on your teeth, which actually increases discoloration and the chance of staining. And once your enamel is gone, it cannot be replaced.

Brushing too hard also damages your gum tissue and can encourage your gums to recede, potentially exposing the roots of your teeth and leading to gum disease, while also causing sensitivity.

So, what should you do instead?

- ❁ Use a soft toothbrush.
- ❁ Angle the head at approximately 45 degrees.
- ❁ Brush your teeth gently, using small, circular motions.
- ❁ Be particularly gentle at the gumline to avoid injuring these soft tissues.
- ❁ Try to brush each area in your mouth for about 10 seconds, spending two to three minutes in each brushing session.



Myth 2

Brushing Once Per Day Is More Than Enough

Most people have heard the age-old advice to brush their teeth twice a day but feel that once a day is enough. According to several studies, over 30% of Americans only brush their teeth once per day.



The logic here goes something like this: even brushing once per day is enough to prevent bacteria and plaque buildup.

This myth is incredibly dangerous – without frequent brushing, plaque and bacteria continue to build up and you'll have a harder and harder time removing it during a single daily brushing session.

Over time, that buildup can lead to gingivitis (gum disease) and then to periodontal

disease. It also increases the likelihood that you'll develop cavities, since food particles remain stuck to the teeth for longer periods, encouraging bacterial buildup, which then exposes your teeth to higher levels of lactic acid.

So, what's the best way to prevent this issue? Brush your teeth at least twice per day – once in the morning before breakfast and once in the evening before bed. You're welcome to brush after every meal for even better oral hygiene, but brushing at least twice per day is the minimum.

How long should each brushing session be? You should brush your teeth for at least two minutes in the morning and before bed. The average American spends just 30 seconds per session, which is far too little to remove plaque and bacteria.

Myth 3

Healthy Gums Will Sometimes Bleed

When you floss your teeth, do you notice blood on the string? Perhaps you taste blood from time to time afterward, or maybe you notice a little pink tinge on the bristles of your toothbrush or in the sink after you brush.

That's normal, right? Healthy gums will sometimes bleed, or at least that's what many people say.



Absolutely not. Healthy gums do not bleed. If you see blood on your floss, toothbrush, or in the sink after brushing, this is a telltale sign that you have gingivitis.

Gingivitis is the beginning stage of gum disease, which can progress to periodontal disease if not treated. Other signs that you may have

gingivitis include red, swollen, irritated gums or a receding gum line.

How do you stop bleeding gums? The answer is good oral hygiene. Brush your teeth at least twice per day for two to three minutes at a time. See your dentist every six months for deep cleanings and checkups. Avoid brushing your teeth too hard or using a hard toothbrush, as these can also cause gum irritation.

If your gums continue to bleed even with good oral hygiene, make sure to consult with your dentist.



Myth 4

If Gums Bleed When You Brush You Should Stop Brushing

Our natural reaction to seeing our bodies bleeding is to stop what we're doing. After all, bleeding is a sign of physical trauma – like a cut finger. Whatever we're doing that might be causing the bleeding is the problem, so if you see your gums bleeding, you should stop brushing right?

Wrong.



Bleeding gums are unhealthy gums. If your gums are bleeding, it means that you need to brush more, not less. It may also be a sign that you're making other mistakes with your oral care, like brushing your teeth too hard, using the wrong toothbrush, or not brushing often enough or for long enough during each session.

If your gums are bleeding, it's your body telling you that they're unhealthy and need more care, not less.

If you continue brushing the area where your gums are bleeding, it will usually stop. Increasing your brushing frequency or time, in addition to learning the right technique for brushing, will help prevent the issue in the future.

You may also want to use a product like ProvaFresh. This sprayable xylitol liquid is designed to be used after a meal or before bed to improve gum health, fight bad bacteria, and restore trace minerals to improve the health of your teeth.

Myth 4

If You Brush Your Teeth Really Well and Use Mouthwash, You Don't Need to Floss

Everyone hates flossing. It's time-consuming and uncomfortable. It's also easy to forget. And who wants to spend even more time at the bathroom sink on top of the time you spend brushing your teeth?

If you brush your teeth well and get into all the nooks and crevices, you don't need to floss, right?

Again, this is wrong.

Your toothbrush cannot get between your teeth where bacteria and food particles



are likely hiding. The only way to do that is with floss or by using a water flosser. Either is acceptable.

What about using mouthwash? It gets between the teeth and flushes out those pesky particles and kills bacteria, right?

No, it doesn't.

Mouthwash can be a helpful tool, but only if you have the right type. And it's not a replacement for flossing as it cannot penetrate fully between your teeth the way floss or water flossers can.



Myth 5

Sharing Your Toothbrush Is OK

You're running behind and pressed for time. Maybe you overslept or you just didn't realize the time. You grab a toothbrush from the holder, apply toothpaste, and brush your teeth, only to realize that you've accidentally used your partner's toothbrush.

Oh well, you think. A toothbrush is a toothbrush and there's nothing wrong with sharing, right?

Stop right there. Sharing toothbrushes is not only gross but dangerous.

The problem is that when you use a toothbrush, the bristles collect bits of plaque, food, and even bacteria. Rinsing it under water before putting it away is not enough to completely clean it off.



So, not only are you sharing a toothbrush, but you're sharing the other person's germs and bacteria. That's not all, either. You can also spread strep mutans, which is the leading cause of tooth decay and can allow you to spread cavities to others.

Never, ever share a toothbrush. Everyone in the household should have their own. If you are somewhere that you cannot access your own toothbrush, skip brushing until you get home.

Bacterial overgrowth can cause devastating consequences for your oral health. Balancing good bacteria with "bad" bacteria is one way to help prevent that situation. Products like ProvaDent, an advanced oral probiotic complex, help ensure that your oral flora stays in balance and helps prevent symptoms like tooth decay and painful, swollen gums, as well as the spread of bacteria to the rest of the body, which can lead to heart disease, diabetes, and more.

Myth 6

Diet Drinks Are Good for Your Teeth Since They Don't Have Sugar

We've all heard the advice – avoid sugar because it causes cavities. There's some sense to this guidance. Sugar creates a breeding ground for bacteria and encourages them to gather, increasing the level of lactic acid to which your teeth are exposed.

**So, does that mean diet drinks are good for your teeth?
Not even a little bit.**

Here's the thing. Most diet drinks are highly acidic on their own – just as acidic as apple cider vinegar. They usually have a pH of 2.8, and anything with a pH lower than 5 can break down tooth enamel. If you have more than a couple of cans of soda per day, you're causing serious damage to your teeth.

It's not just the acid, though. Artificial sweeteners can change the number and type of bacteria in your mouth and affect your gut biome, as well. This could lead to an overgrowth of "bad" bacteria as "good" bacteria dwindles.

So, what can you do?

First, limit your intake of soda (whether diet or otherwise). Second, rinse your mouth after drinking soda with clean water. Third, make sure to practice good oral hygiene to keep your enamel intact and your teeth healthy! Finally, a product like ProvaDent can help balance bacteria in the mouth to avoid an overgrowth situation.



Myth 7

Gum Recession Is Gum Disease

You're brushing your teeth when you notice something out of the ordinary. Concerned, you lean in closer to the mirror. Are your gums receding? Is that a little bit of root showing? Do you have gum disease?

Probably not.



Yes, gingivitis (gum disease) can cause gum recession. However, most receding gums stem from using the wrong tools or from brushing too hard.

Take a look at the type of toothbrush you're using. Does it have medium, hard, or extra hard bristles? If so, that's the reason your gums are receding. Only use soft bristle brushes to avoid causing trauma that might make your gums recede.

Another culprit is your brushing method. Are you brushing particularly hard to keep your teeth clean and remove discolorations? If so, that could also be causing your gums to recede. Both using the wrong toothbrush and brushing too hard can also leave your teeth and gums susceptible to harmful bacteria.

Be gentle with your teeth. Brush using slow, small, gentle circles, and never, ever scrub your teeth hard.

If you're concerned about your gum recession and overall oral health, make sure to visit your dentist every six months for a full checkup.

Myth 8

You Can Always Tell If You Have Gum Disease

Gum disease – it's a frightening condition, often marked by red, irritated, swollen, bleeding gums and receding gum lines. It's easy to tell if you have gum disease, right? So, if you don't see any signs, you don't need to be concerned and it's not imperative to schedule a dental visit.



Wrong. Often, gum disease presents with no visible signs or symptoms at all. That means unless you visit a periodontist

or dentist who can check the health of your gums with the proper tools and X-rays, there's no way you will know until the disease has reached an advanced state.

According to the CDC, 46% of Americans over the age of 30 have some form of gum disease. Most of them have no idea that their oral health is in danger. A dental checkup is the only way to determine if you have gum disease – the leading cause of tooth loss in the US.

In addition to tooth loss, gum disease can also cause:

- Systemic/whole-body inflammation
- Inflammation is the primary cause of aging and other diseases, including:
 - Dementia
 - Diabetes
 - Heart disease

A dental checkup does more than just ensure the health of your gums. It can help protect you from a wide range of other diseases.

Myth 9

Color Correcting Serums Are Good for Whitening Teeth

We all want white, healthy teeth. However, everyday habits like drinking coffee, soda, or tea, and even genetics may mean that your teeth are off-white. Color-correcting serums promise to give you instant results, dramatically whitening your teeth in as little as 30 seconds. They're touted as being good for your teeth and for your self-confidence.



Most dentists will not recommend color-correcting serums for several different reasons, but primarily because the results are temporary – exceedingly so.

In many cases, the whitening you see will last only a short time, ranging from 30 seconds to 20 minutes. That's because color-correcting serums don't whiten your teeth. The effect is an optical illusion created by the dark-colored serum. Even the instructions and disclaimers on the packaging note that the effect is only temporary.

Another reason to avoid color-correcting serums is that they temporarily balance yellow hues. If your teeth are gray-ing, these products will do nothing at all for you, not even temporarily.

What should you do instead? Standard whitening strips available at most pharmacies and grocery stores will give you longer-lasting results. However, if you want to truly erase stains and discolorations, speak with your dentist.

Myth 10

You Should Rinse After Brushing with Nano-Hydroxyapatite Toothpaste

Fluoride has long been the primary defense against tooth weakness and cavities. However, new products have come to market that may dethrone it – nano-hydroxyapatite toothpaste being one of the most popular.

Many people assume that they should brush and then rinse their mouths after using nano-HAp toothpaste.

This is a mistake!

You should never rinse your mouth after using any type of toothpaste, but particularly not nano-hydroxyapatite with toothpaste. By rinsing your mouth after brushing, you remove the material that's supposed to protect your teeth in the first place.

To understand this, you need to know a bit more about HAp. It's both biocompatible, meaning it's non-toxic, and biomimetic, meaning that your body recognizes it as a familiar material and will incorporate it into your teeth.

That's the point of this type of toothpaste – it fills in scratches and damage that can capture bacteria. By rinsing your mouth, you remove the HAp molecules and leave your teeth vulnerable.

To get the benefits of nano-hydroxyapatite toothpaste, rinse first, brush, and then LEAVE it in place.



Myth 11

It's Safe to Just Use a Dental Pick to Remove Tartar at Home

When you visit the dentist, they will use a pick or other dental tool to scrape away tartar buildup from your teeth. Why go to the trouble of making an appointment for that when you can buy your own tools and do it yourself right at home? It's completely safe, right?

No, this is incredibly dangerous. You should never, ever attempt to use dental tools to remove tartar from your teeth and/or gum line. But why?

Toxicity – One of the most important reasons is that the calculus (tartar buildup) on your teeth contains a lot of bacteria. Breaking that up and scraping it off can re-



So, what's the safe solution? Visit your dentist for a professional, safe cleaning. A dental professional can use powerful tools with great precision, removing buildup without causing problems with toxicity, damaging your enamel, or injuring your gums.



Myth 12

Baking Soda, Hydrogen Peroxide, Charcoal and Safer and More Effective for At-Home Teeth Whitening

In our quest for ever-whiter teeth, companies have come up with a wide range of tantalizing products. Social media influencers tout these home-made remedies that promise to help you whiten your teeth faster and for a fraction of the cost involved with visiting a dentist.

Baking soda, hydrogen peroxide, charcoal, and other products are safer, faster, and more effective for at-home teeth whitening, right?

No, they are not.

Depending on the product in question, as well as the concentration, application method, and other variables, these can cause:

- Chemical burns to your teeth and gums
- Allergic reactions that cause pain, swelling, and other issues
- Extreme sensitivity and pain

It's possible to whiten your teeth, but the safest and most effective options are to use whitening strips or visit your dentist for an in-office treatment.

Myth 13

Plaque and Tartar Are the Same Thing

You're told you need to visit the dentist to keep your teeth clean and free of tartar. You're told that you need to brush your teeth at least twice a day to remove plaque buildup. But they're the same thing, right? So why do you need to worry about both?

Here's the deal – plaque and tartar are not the same thing. However, they're related.

Plaque is a soft collection of bacteria/biofilm that collects on your teeth in between brushings. You remove most of it by brushing and flossing. However, what isn't removed slowly transforms. It calcifies and turns into tartar.

Tartar is a cement-like substance that contains a host of dangerous bacteria but adheres to the surface of your teeth and can cover your gums. It also makes a perfect hiding place for new bacteria to collect, where it hardens and turns from plaque into more tartar!

Once it becomes tartar, the only way to remove it safely is with professional dental tools in a dentist's office. If you don't remove it, it can cause gum disease, loss of teeth, and even overall harm to your body.

Myth 14

Drinking Coffee with a Straw Protects Your Teeth from Staining

There's nothing quite like that first sip of coffee in the morning! Most of us need our daily dose of java to get our brains in gear and our bodies moving. But who wants all that staining

on our teeth? Drinking coffee with a straw protects your teeth from staining, right? So, you don't need to worry about visiting a dentist to have those stains removed.

This is only half-true. And because of that, it's more problematic than if it was entirely false.

Here's the deal. Drinking coffee through a straw prevents you from sipping it. That



helps to prevent your front teeth from staining and enamel damage.

However, the coffee still hits your middle and back teeth. You just don't notice it as much. And because you don't see it and believe that you're protecting your teeth with the straw, chances are good that you're paying less attention to the condition of your back teeth than you should, resulting in more serious stains and enamel erosion.

The solution? Limit the amount of coffee or tea that you drink in the first place. And consider skipping the straw, since it doesn't really do your whole mouth any good. Work with your dentist to repair damage to your teeth and to clean up any staining that you can't remove with regular brushing and flossing.



Myth 15

You Should Floss After Brushing Your Teeth

Flossing is an essential part of oral hygiene. It helps remove food particles and plaque from between your teeth where your brush cannot reach. But the most important thing is to floss daily after brushing, right?

No!

You should always, always floss your teeth before you brush. Otherwise, it's less effective and you're also leaving biofilm/plaque on your teeth, where it begins to calcify and turn into tartar.

When you floss, little bits of the debris from between your teeth move to the fronts and backs of your teeth. If you've already brushed, then you cannot clean those remains away.

It's not just about removing as much debris as possible, either. When you floss and clean those in-between spaces, you help ensure fluoride from the toothpaste can penetrate those areas. If you floss after brushing, then no fluoride reaches between the teeth, leaving them susceptible to cavities.

Conclusion

Good oral hygiene is vital for protecting your teeth and gums. However, you must be able to navigate around the many myths, misunderstandings, and outright misinformation out there.

From debunking color-correcting serums to the right way to brush and floss, this book has set you straight on 15 of the most common dental myths and what you should do instead.

When in doubt, the best advice is this: ask your dentist. They'll always be happy to provide accurate, informed, expert guidance to help you achieve the results that you want, even if the right solution for you isn't an in-office treatment.

