

# BE PROUD OF YOUR MOUTH

## Take charge of your oral health

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### Why it is important

Oral health can be maintained by being aware of your risk factors and taking action to prevent disease. The good news is that by controlling these risk factors you can also help avoid other health conditions, such as heart and respiratory diseases, cancer and diabetes.

Most oral health conditions are largely preventable and can be treated in their early stages. Maintaining good oral health has a positive impact on your general health, well-being and quality of life.



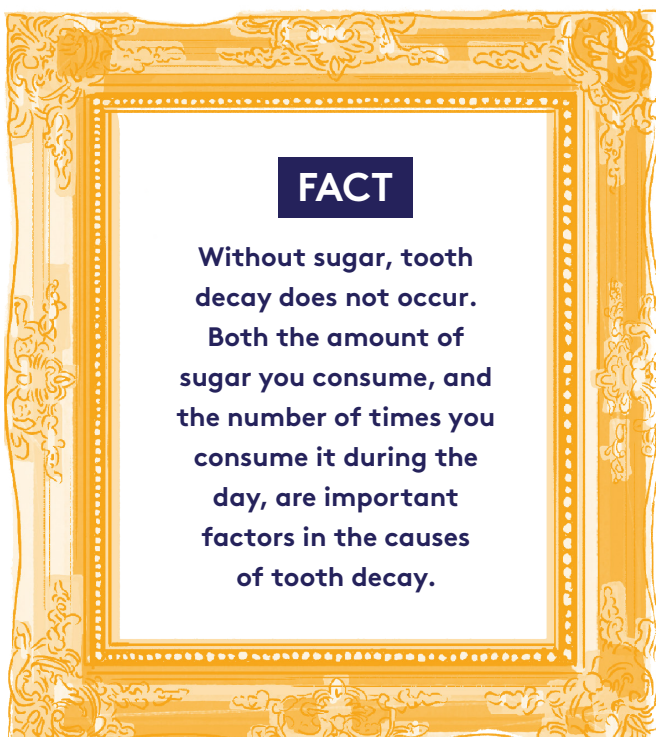
### Understanding the risk factors

Major risk factors include an unhealthy diet that is high in sugar, tobacco use, the harmful use of alcohol and poor oral hygiene.

#### Unhealthy diet – high in sugar

Adults should have no more than six teaspoons of sugar daily; for children it's three. Consuming excessive amounts of sugar from snacks, processed foods and soft drinks is a leading risk factor for oral diseases. Soft drinks include any beverage with added sugar, such as sodas, fruit juices, sweetened powdered drinks, and sports and energy drinks.

Read the *Eat a balanced, low-sugar diet* fact sheet for some practical tips.



## Tobacco use

Tobacco is one of the greatest public health challenges the world faces today. It is the leading cause of preventable death in the world.

Tobacco in any form, smoking or smokeless, is unsafe. Tobacco use puts your mouth at an increased risk of gum disease and oral cancer. It also causes teeth staining, bad breath, premature tooth loss, and loss of taste and smell.

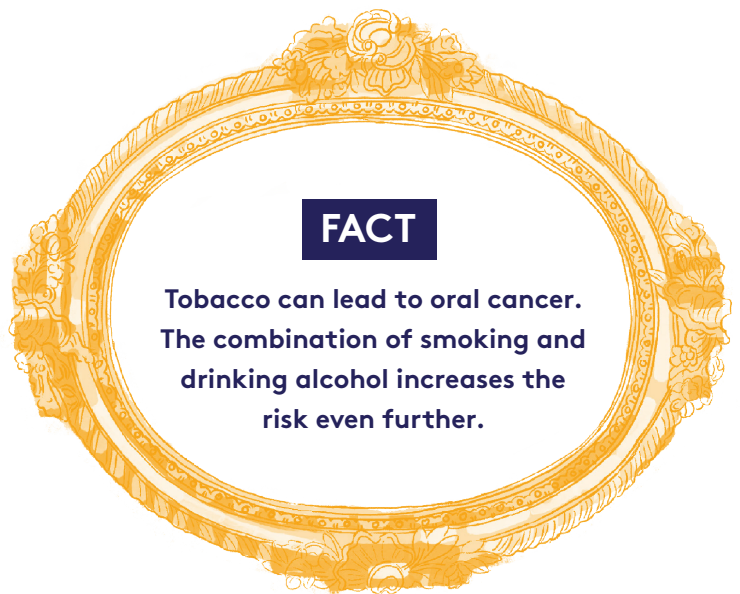
## Alcohol consumption

Harmful use of alcohol is strongly linked with an increased risk of several cancers, including cancers of the mouth, larynx, pharynx and oesophagus. Furthermore, the acid and high sugar content of most alcoholic drinks can erode your teeth, leading to tooth decay.

## Poor oral hygiene

Poor oral hygiene has long term consequences on the mouth, mind and body. Tooth decay can cause discomfort, pain and social isolation. Untreated gum infection can eventually result in tooth loss and increase the risk of developing diabetes or heart disease, as well as other serious illnesses. Brushing your teeth twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste makes them more resistant to acids that cause tooth decay. A good oral hygiene routine, combined with regular visits to the dentist, is key to helping prevent oral conditions.

Read the *Practice a good oral hygiene routine* and *Visit the dentist regularly* fact sheets to learn more about how to protect your mouth.



## Avoid injuries to your mouth

Use protective equipment, such as a mouth guard, when doing contact sports and travelling on bicycles and motorcycles to reduce the risk of injuries.



**Good oral health can help you live a longer, healthier life**

For more information, visit [www.worldoralhealthday.org](http://www.worldoralhealthday.org)  
#MouthProud #WOHD21