

14 Ways to Take Care of Your Smile in 2014

Your smile can be one of your best assets; in fact, many people say it's the first thing they notice about strangers. We've assembled 14 tips to help you keep your mouth healthy and make the most of your smile over the next year.

1. **Rinse with water after eating.** It's usually inconvenient to brush after eating, but even rinsing with water helps wash food and debris from your teeth, and denies cavity-causing bacteria a meal. It also keeps your mouth moist, which helps prevent dry mouth and bad breath.
2. **Floss more.** If you're not flossing at least once a day, you're not flossing enough. It's the single best way to remove plaque from places your toothbrush can't reach. Use about 18 inches of floss per session.
3. **Stop smoking.** You already knew that, but here's a reminder why: Smoking makes your teeth yellow and can also lead to gum disease, tooth loss and oral cancers.
4. **Keep regular dental appointments.** If you avoid the dentist now, you may develop dental problems that require more complicated treatments later on.
5. **Brush your tongue.** Just like your teeth, your tongue holds a plethora of food and bacteria that can cause bad odors if left untreated. Buy a tongue scraper or be sure to give your tongue a good brushing every time you have your toothbrush out.
6. **Don't neglect the molar teeth in the very back of your mouth.** Because they do a lot of the heavy lifting when it comes to chewing, molars get just as dirty as the rest of your teeth, if not more so. Despite this, they seem to get less toothbrush time than other teeth. Pay extra attention to the sides next to the tongue.
7. **Switch to gum with xylitol.** Yes, you can chew gum. If the main sweetener is xylitol, regular use may actually stop bacteria from sticking to tooth enamel. Your second-best bet is sugar-free gum, which doesn't promote tooth decay and can help get saliva flowing to wash away food particles from teeth.
8. **Use a mouthguard.** Although they're required for many high-impact sports such as football and ice hockey, they should be used in *any* sport that may pose risks to your teeth, including basketball, cycling, gymnastics, skateboarding and more. Don't have a mouthguard? Talk with your dentist about having one made or other options, like store-bought mouthguards.
9. **Stop chewing your nails.** It's bad for your teeth *and* your hands. Nail biting has been linked to other behaviors that are bad for your mouth, such as teeth grinding and jaw clenching.
10. **Stop bad breath.** Occasional halitosis, or bad breath, is pretty common. It can be caused by coffee, onions, garlic and other strong-smelling foods and drinks. If your bad breath persists long after these culprits are gone, consider talking with your dentist to determine the cause – tobacco use, prescription medication, your diet or even systemic illnesses may be the reason.
11. **Your teeth are not scissors.** Don't use them to rip open packages. Using your teeth as tools can lead to a cracked tooth, which may mean a root canal or even an extraction. Use something else to open sealed bags or turn tight bottle caps.
12. **De-stress.** People who clench or grind their teeth often do so because of stress. Try to de-stress by eating right, getting regular exercise and making it a point to relax your face and jaw muscles several times throughout the day.
13. **Smile more.** Smiling – even forced smiling – has been scientifically proven to improve your mood. Smiles are contagious, so not only will you feel happier, you might brighten someone else's day as well.
14. **Invest in an electric toothbrush.** Spending a little now will save your gums and teeth some sensitivity at future dental cleanings. Plus you'll be happier with better dental checkups. It's a win-win situation.

LAURELWOOD DENTAL

The ever changing world of dental coverage....

Navigating the world of insurance has never been an easy process. January 2014 has brought even more challenges our way. Laurelwood Dental is committed to partnering with you, our patients, and helping you understand your insurance benefits and options. Many insurance companies want dentists to be under 'contract' with them. These plans are called PPOs or Preferred Provider Organizations. Many people have their health insurance under this arrangement. Unfortunately the task of providing quality work, materials, and service under this system has become increasingly more difficult than in previous years. Laurelwood Dental has declined to join any PPOs, because we want to work for our patients best interest, not the interests of the insurance companies. Rate cuts imposed by PPOs would force us to use cheaper materials, decrease the length of patient visits, and prevent us from being able to offer you the latest advances in dental technology. Staying out of network allows our dentists and hygienists to give you the quality of care and service that you deserve.

We strive to keep our patients well-informed with regard to insurance issues and our practices. We utilize online tools and make phone calls daily to make sure we give the most accurate insurance information. We will always work with your insurance company as an out-of-network provider. In some cases we will send a Predetermination of benefits to have the insurance estimate in writing, but even this can sometimes leave an unexpected cost in the end. Here are some key points to remember when trying to understand your insurance plan:

- **We are an out-of-network provider.** We will work with you to make the most of your coverage while giving you the service you deserve.
- **We are a "Premier level" dentist with ODS [MODA Health].** We file our fees with ODS to assure that we have average fees compared to other dental offices in our area.
- **Be proactive.** Contact your provider to make sure your ID# and coverage is just as you understand it to be.
- **It takes team work.** Please be sure we have all the necessary information to submit claims ` on your behalf.

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Rave Reviews

Dr. Reed Hall saves tooth

Laurelwood Dental in NE Portland won this dental phobic patient over! I had to have a crown replaced and was amazed at the quality and above all the quickness of the procedure. Dr. Hall completed my new porcelain crown in one visit. Computer technology enabled Dr. Hall and his assistant to design, create and install a beautiful new crown in a little over an hour. Laurelwood Dental can expect me to be a regular and happy client. Laura B, Vancouver WA



We are gladly accepting new patients!

We always consider it the highest of compliments when you refer your friends and family.