

ORAL HEALTH MONTH

Abby Degaust
Ask your dentist

Q: Do I really need to book an appointment with my dentist every six months?

A: The goal of a dental check up and cleaning is to catch small problems early and for most people this means an appointment every six months. However, your dentist or dental hygienist may recommend coming in more or less often based on how well you care for your teeth and gums. Some factors to consider when determining how often you should see your dentist include:

1. Do you brush your teeth two times per day with fluoride toothpaste?
2. Do you floss everyday?
3. Do you eat a well-balanced diet and limit sweets and sticky foods?
4. Do you smoke?
5. Do you have a history of cavities or gum disease?
6. Is your overall health good?

You should not determine your need for dental care based on what your dental insurance covers. Each treatment plan is individualized to the patient, regardless of their insurance coverage.

Q: Do I need dental x-rays at each of these visits?

A: The need for dental x-rays depends on your oral health. A healthy adult who has not had any cavities or other oral health problems for the last couple of years will not need x-rays at every appointment. However, if your dental health is unstable or there are areas being monitored, you may require more frequent x-rays. Dental x-rays deliver very little radiation and are a vital tool for your dentist to ensure that small problems do not get bigger. The typical x-rays taken at a check up appointment are four bitewings and the total amount of radiation for these x-rays is about 0.005 millisiverts, which is less than the daily dose of radiation in everyday life and most dental offices are also using lead aprons for added protection. If you have questions about the particular x-rays that are being taken or the frequency, ask your dentist.



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