

## Oral Health Month

The month of April is Oral Health month and taking care of our mouth, teeth and gums can positively impact other aspects of our lives. Oral pain, missing teeth or oral infections can influence the way a person speaks, eats and socializes. These oral health problems can reduce a person's quality of life by affecting their physical, mental and social well-being. Gum disease can lead to loss of teeth and can put you at an increased risk of more serious diseases such as respiratory disease. Gum disease is also associated with diabetes, heart and lung disease, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease and many other health conditions.

Here are some oral hygiene practices that can help with the care of our mouth:

- Brush teeth and tongue after each meal and at bedtime; at a minimum, once a day and always before going to bed.
- Floss teeth at least once daily because "if you don't floss, you are missing more than a third of your tooth surface."
- Avoid sweet foods and drinks between meals. Take them in moderation at meals.
- Ensure adequate intake of nutrients, particularly calcium, phosphorus and vitamins A, C and D.
- Eat coarse, fibrous foods, such as fresh fruits and raw vegetables.
- Have a checkup by a dentist every 6 to 9 months.