

# Regular Dental Visits – Why Are They Important?

Have you ever wondered why the American Dental Association and your dentist recommend you come back every six months? It is because regular dental visits are essential for the maintenance of healthy teeth and gums. In between those six-month examinations, it is important that you work to keep your teeth and gums clean and healthy. If you need additional help, your dentist may even suggest more frequent visits.



Here are what healthy teeth and gums look like after a dental cleaning.



Plaque and tartar can build up in a very short time if good oral hygiene is not practiced between visits. Food, beverages, and tobacco can stain teeth as well.



If not removed, soft plaque can harden on the teeth (form tartar) and irritate the gum tissue.

Checking your teeth for tooth decay is just one part of a thorough dental examination. During your checkup appointments your dentist (or the dental hygienist) will likely evaluate the health of your gums, perform a head and neck examination (to look for anything out of the ordinary), examine your mouth for any indications of oral cancer, diabetes, or vitamin deficiencies. Don't be surprised if your dentist also examines your face, bite, saliva, and movement of your lower jaw joints (TMJs). Your dentist or the dental hygienist will then clean your teeth and stress the importance of you maintaining good oral hygiene at home between visits.

## The Regular Dental Visit

During your regularly-scheduled dental appointments your dentist will likely look at your gums, mouth, tongue, and throat.

### THE HEAD & NECK EXAMINATION

- Examine your face
- Examine your neck
- Check your lymph nodes
- Check your lower jaw joints (TMJs)

### THE CLINICAL DENTAL EXAMINATION

- Examine the gums
- Look for signs of gum disease
- Check for loose teeth
- Look at the tissues inside of your mouth
- Examine your tongue
- Check your bite
- Look for visual evidence of tooth decay
- Check for broken teeth
- Check for damaged fillings
- Look for changes in the gums covering teeth
- Evaluate any dental appliance you have
- Check the contact between your teeth
- Take x-rays

### THE DENTAL CLEANING

- Check the cleanliness of your teeth and gums
- Remove any plaque and tartar
- Polish your teeth
- Floss between your teeth
- Review recommended brushing and flossing techniques

Once your examination and cleaning have been performed, your dentist will tell you about the health of your teeth and gums and make any additional recommendations. By seeing your dentist on a regular basis and following daily good oral hygiene practices at home, you are more likely to keep your teeth and gums healthy.

*For healthy teeth and gums, make certain you follow the instructions of your dentist and dental hygienist. And make regular visits to the dental office.*

*Remember, prevention is the key.*