Teeth and Gum Care

Most problems with teeth and gums can be prevented if you do the following:

- Brush Your Teeth
  - Brush after each meal or at least 3 times a day with a **soft** bristle tooth brush.
  - Brush in a circular motion.
  - Brush close to your gums as well as your teeth.
  - Brush your back teeth longer than your front teeth.
- Floss your teeth once a day. Before bedtime is a good time to floss.
- Go to a Dentist 2 times a year.

- Eat a Balanced Diet
  - Eat good meals including fruits, vegetables, fish, chicken or other meat, and milk products.
- Drink 8-10 glasses of water a day.
- Do not eat candy or snack foods.
- Do not drink sugar-sweetened soft drinks or juice.

- If a problem develops, go to your Dentist right away.
  - Common problems are cavities, bleeding gums, sores or lumps in your mouth, or pain in your teeth, gums or jaws.
  - It is important to see a Dentist right away for these problems because you may lose your teeth or have a lot of pain if you do not go soon.

- Take Care of Children's Teeth
  - Brush your child's teeth with a **soft** bristle tooth brush.
  - Do not let your child eat or drink sweet foods and drinks.
  - Do not let your child fall asleep with bottles in their mouth.
  - Take your child to a dentist when they are between 2 and 3 years old. This is the age you should start taking your child to a dentist. If your child has problems with their teeth, take them to a dentist sooner.

- If a Tooth is Knocked Out (yours or your child's)
  - Save the tooth if possible.
  - Wrap it in tissue. Even better, put it in a glass of milk.
  - Take it with you to your dentist right away.

Easy-to-Read style based on content from Parkland Health & Hospital System, Dallas, Texas

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