



Your mouth is talking. *Are you listening?*

# OMG! Ur teeth!

**Cavities and other dental problems** can be a real pain, not to mention cramping your social life. You take three minutes to check your phone every morning and night. How about three minutes to brush and floss. **PUHLEESE!** YOUR MOUTH

## Your mouth is talking. *Are you listening?*

# Oral Health for Kids and Teens

It's vital to your cell phone use, takes many shapes in pictures with friends and can sometimes get you into trouble. It's your MOUTH, and it has a lot to say. Maintaining a healthy smile means more than just a visit to your dentist twice a year. It means brushing and flossing twice a day and making smart choices for snacks and drinks. Read on for more on these and other tips from the Missouri Dental Association (MDA) to help keep your mouth jazzed.

- **DENTAL SEALANTS** For teeth at risk of cavities, ask your dentist about dental sealants. Sealants can reduce the likelihood of a tooth getting new decay by as much as 70 percent, making this a smart way to fight cavities. Sealants can save kids a preventable trip to the dental office and parents the cost of getting cavities filled.

- **TOOTH DECAY** Before grabbing a soda, sports drink or energy drink from the vending machine, consider milk or water. Excess consumption of drinks with lots of sugar and acid can lead to tooth decay and other health problems, including obesity. You don't have to deny your sweet tooth altogether – just be smart about the choices you're making.

*Dental cavities are the most common disease of kids age 5 to 17. That's right – disease – and it's preventable.*

- **DENTAL INJURY** You won't look so great in pics if your smile has a big hole in it. If a tooth is knocked out and not properly preserved or reimplanted, The National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, Inc. estimates it can cost \$10,000 to \$15,000 per tooth over your lifetime. Mouth guards, which cover the upper teeth, are an essential part of your sports equipment because they soften physical contact to the face, minimizing the risk of broken teeth and injuries to the tongue, lips and lining of the cheek. If you wear braces, mouth guards are especially important – a blow to your face could cut your cheeks and lips. Ouch!

- **ORAL PIERCINGS** Mouth jewelry makes a statement, but your mouth may have a few things to say about it too. Pain and swelling of the pierced area is common, as are injuries to the gums. Piercings may become infected easily and cause bad breath. Teeth can chip or crack from contact with the jewelry, especially in those who have a tendency to play with their piercing. If you have a pierced tongue, lip or cheek, rinse with an antibacterial, alcohol-free mouth rinse for 30 to 60 seconds after each meal and before you go to bed.

### SOURCES

*The American Dental Association and National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, Inc.*

**Brush, floss and visit your MDA dentist.**

For more on what your mouth is trying to tell you, visit [YourMouthIsTalking.org](http://YourMouthIsTalking.org).