



## Teen Dental Health: A Parent's Guide

### Helping Your Teen Build Healthy Habits for Life

Teenagers go through major changes—and their teeth do too. From braces to hormones to growing independence, now's the time to reinforce strong oral hygiene habits that will protect their smile well into adulthood.

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#### Daily Dental Care Musts

- **Brush twice a day** with fluoride toothpaste (especially after sugary snacks).
- **Floss daily**—braces or not, flossing is essential to remove plaque between teeth.
- **Use mouthwash** to reduce bacteria and freshen breath (alcohol-free for sensitive mouths).
- Encourage **drinking water** over sugary drinks to keep enamel strong and prevent decay.

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#### Regular Dental Visits

- Teens should see the dentist **every 6 months** for cleanings and check-ups.
- These visits help monitor for **early signs of decay, gum disease, and jaw development issues**.

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#### Braces and Orthodontic Care

- Braces require extra attention to hygiene—food easily gets trapped around brackets. Therefore we recommend **hygiene visits every 4 months**.
- Provide orthodontic tools like **floss threaders, interdental brushes, and water flossers**.
- Stress the importance of keeping braces clean to **avoid staining and decalcification** (white spots on teeth).

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#### HPV and Oral Health

- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)** is now one of the leading causes of **oral and throat cancers**—and it can affect teens.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about the **HPV vaccine**, typically recommended around ages 11–12.
- Regular dental exams can help detect **early changes in soft tissue**.

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#### Avoid These Common Pitfalls

- **Skiping flossing**—especially with braces, it leads to plaque build-up and gum issues.
- **Frequent snacking and energy drinks**—they feed bacteria and erode enamel.
- **Using teeth as tools**—biting nails, pens, or bottles can cause chips and cracks.
- **Oral piercings**—can damage gums and teeth, and increase infection risk.

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#### ♥ Support Their Smile

Teenagers often won't say it, but they notice how they look—and a healthy smile builds confidence. Encourage their independence while gently reminding them how to care for their teeth. Let them pick their

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own toothbrush – whether manual or electric, use reminder apps, or set routines that make brushing and flossing part of the day.

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## Have questions or concerns?

We're here to support you and your teen every step of the way.

**Book a check-up with Toothworx today—your teen's future smile will thank you!**

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