

TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", is especially true regarding dental health. Just being proactive and doing something more than you have been doing, or with more thought, can improve your health. Make the time, typically only two to four minutes twice-a-day, to prevent dental problems and reduce dental health care expenses.

Top recommendations for reducing dental health care costs:

Brush well twice a day, floss once a day, see your dentist at least twice a year and follow their recommendations, have x-rays taken at least once a year, have all defects in the development of your teeth protected with sealants. Be sure your kids follow that same advice, for their sake as well as yours. Most dental disease is preventable. Reducing your cost of dental health care is directly related to what you chose to do.

Top products recommended:

- The #1 toothpaste in my mind is a prescription; *Prevident 5000 Plus*. Though more expensive than regular toothpaste you only need to use a little, about the size of a pea, so a tube lasts a long time. It helps protect your teeth.
- *ProxiCare* by *Arm and Hammer* is my over-the-counter preference, due to baking soda and peroxide content. Most toothpastes are simply mouth-soaps with sand in them to help remove stain, and have a little fluoride. No toothpaste whitens teeth other than by sanding off stain, which can cause irreversible problems when used wrong. Baking soda is a very mild abrasive that neutralizes acids. A small amount of peroxide helps kill some germs that do not like oxygen.
- I recommend using a sonic-type electric toothbrush, such as *SoniCare Elite* or *Oral-B Sonic Complete*, with a small brush head. Ask your dental team members how to use it and you can bring it to your next visit for a demonstration. I strongly advise against a circular "spin" brush of any make.
- If you chose a manual brush select a soft, name-brand type, such as *Oral-B* or *Butler*. All manual brushes work the same if used correctly, so do not be fooled by different shapes and colors. Scrubbing with a sandy toothpaste will damage your gums and teeth. What you need to remove each day is soft, gelatinous bacterial colonies that we call plaque. Be gentle but thorough.
- Monofilament floss, such as *Glide*, is less frustrating than string floss. *Oral-B Ultra-Floss* is my choice for people that do not have problems with floss shredding. If you have trouble or dislike holding floss in your fingers I highly recommend *Reach Access*.
- Denture adhesives: Many of my patients prefer *SeaBond*. It is easy to place in your denture and easy to remove. *Fasteeth* powder for uppers and *Fixodent* gel for lowers can also help. Gels can be hard clean off. Unflavored is preferred. Take dentures out when you sleep, just like taking shoes and socks off. Give your gums a rest.
- To reduce populations of organisms in your mouth rinse with *Listerine* (not *Listermint* fluoride rinse), or a generic with the identical ingredients; any flavor is fine. It does not replace flossing (nothing does yet), but it really does help reduce *gingivitis*, and improves the breath. No mouthwash whitens teeth.
- To improve breath, a toothpaste with baking soda helps, as well as *Listerine*. Also excellent are the *Listerine Pocket Pak's* for an instant improvement. Avoiding onions, garlic, cigarettes, and coffee will help, too. A toothpaste containing chlorine dioxide, like *CloSys II*, works great for chronic bad breath. Flossing, and brushing your tongue will also help a lot. Ask your dentist if you feel you have a breath problem that does not respond to the above recommendations.
- Some lightening of your teeth can be done inexpensively with store-bought *Crest White Strips*, BUT, your dentist has comparably priced professional strength agents, such as my # 1 recommended *Tres' White*, and other, more effective products. *Xantia* is great for stubborn teeth. For a power-boost to

reduce treatment time ask your dentist as there are many in-office treatments that work very nicely. Do not swallow bleaching gel. Flavors are made to be a pleasant reminder that you should spit it out. Many store-bought and "TV ad" whitening products are made in China and other third world countries with no safety or hygienic standards.

Good oral health saves you money, promotes comfort, and reduces pregnancy complications, heart disease, and many ailments caused by oral bacteria and inflammation! There are other products that can help you. Your dental team will have their own recommendations, and some that may differ from mine. Trust them to make recommendations for your benefit based on their experiences and education. We all want the best for our patients, and to help reduce your expenses