

# FAMILY SMILECARE CENTER, PLC

Our Mission: Helping you keep your smile for a lifetime.



## NEW SEASON, NEW TOOTHBRUSH

As you change your summer clothes for a fall wardrobe, it may also be time to replace your toothbrush for a new one. The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends replacing your toothbrush every three to four months. If that sounds like a lot, just think: This small but very important tool gets a lot of use!

If you brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes each time as recommended by the ADA, that's two hours of brushing action in one month. Three to four months of twice-daily brushing makes for six to eight hours of brushing time, or a couple hundred uses. This is all an average toothbrush can take before it stops doing its job effectively.

Toothbrush bristles are manufactured to have the right amount of give, tapering, and end-rounding for optimal cleaning. When new, a toothbrush can work its way around corners and between teeth to remove dental plaque. Old bristles, however, lose the flexibility needed to reach into nooks and crannies for a thorough cleaning. Worn bristles may curl, fray or break — and can scratch your gums or tooth enamel. A toothbrush with stiff, curled bristles does not leave your mouth feeling as clean.

A good rule of thumb is to replace your toothbrush every season — unless you see signs that you need a new one sooner. For example, if you wear braces, you may have to replace your toothbrush more frequently since brushing around braces puts more wear on the bristles.



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## DENTAL X-RAYS: WHAT'S THE DANGER?

If you've ever been to the dentist, you probably have had dental radiographs, known better as x-rays. There's that little sensor attached to a stick, which gets placed in your mouth as you bite down to hold it in place. Sometimes a little uncomfortable, these x-rays provide important information about your oral health.

While the benefits of dental x-rays are many, let's discuss a few of the big ones. Tooth decay that is not visible to the naked eye can be seen clearly. Periodontal disease, resulting in loss of the bone holding the teeth in place, is also diagnosed from x-rays. Lastly, many dangerous and painful infections can be seen on x-rays showing the roots of the teeth. Without x-rays, a dentist cannot legally treat you.

### How often should you be getting x-rays?

Every person is different. A general rule of thumb is that bitewing x-rays should be taken every year and a full series of x-rays or a panoramic x-ray should be taken every 3-5 years. This can vary greatly depending on the patient. For those fortunate people who have never had a cavity, x-rays can be taken every 2-3 years. For those with a history of dental issues, more frequent x-rays are recommended.

### How much radiation am I getting and is it safe?

The short answer is yes, dental x-rays are safe. Now let's be more specific. Digital x-rays, which we have at Family SmileCare Center, produce about 90% less radiation than traditional dental x-rays. Each digital x-ray gives off about 5-6  $\mu\text{Sv}$  (microSieverts) of radiation. Let's compare it to other sources of radiation in our life:

- Cross country flight from New York to Los Angeles = 40  $\mu\text{Sv}$  (roughly the equivalent of 4 bitewing/check-up dental x-rays)
- Smoking  $\frac{1}{2}$  pack of cigarettes = 80  $\mu\text{Sv}$
- Chest x-ray = 100  $\mu\text{Sv}$
- Eating a banana = 0.1  $\mu\text{Sv}$
- Living at sea level = 250  $\mu\text{Sv}$  per year
- Living in Denver = 500  $\mu\text{Sv}$  per year

As you can see, radiation is all around us. In the grand scheme of life, dental x-rays make up a tiny amount of the yearly radiation exposure. But does all this radiation mean something terrible, like cancer, will develop from it? According to the World Health Organization (WHO), if a person is exposed to greater than 100,000  $\mu\text{Sv}$  per year, there is a small increased risk in getting cancer. That's the equivalent of about 1,000 full sets of dental x-rays (18 x-rays), or almost 3 sets of bitewing x-rays per day for the year.

The bottom line is that dental x-rays are safe and provide necessary information for your dentist to take exceptional care of your oral health. Even pregnant women can have dental x-rays safely if needed. If you have any questions or concerns, talk to us about the benefits of routine dental x-rays at your next visit.

## Office Information

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### Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday ..... 7am to 6pm

*Call us to Schedule For You & Your Family.*

Visit our website for other information about our office. [www.familysmilecarecenter.com](http://www.familysmilecarecenter.com)



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## News From Your Dentist



Dr. Renee Maikon



Dr. Amy Stodola

# Diabetes and Dental Health

If you've been diagnosed with diabetes, you are aware of the extra precautions you must take in order to maintain your health. You may not be aware, however, that your condition also has effects on your dental health. Here are some of the issues involving diabetes and your oral health:

### **Gum Disease**

People with diabetes are at higher risk for gum disease, both gingivitis and the more advanced form known as periodontitis. This is characterized by an infection of the gum and bone that hold the teeth in place. Plaque that is not removed can eventually harden into tartar, and when tartar collects above the gumline, it becomes more difficult to thoroughly brush and clean between teeth. This can create conditions that lead to chronic inflammation and infection in the mouth. Because diabetes reduces the body's resistance to infection, the gums are among

the tissues likely to be affected. This condition is sometimes "silent" and may not be painful.

### **Tooth Decay**

When diabetes is not controlled properly, high glucose levels in saliva may help bacteria thrive. This occurs when your mouth is especially dry as a result of the medicines you take or when your blood sugar levels are high. When there's less saliva to wash away germs and acids, or poor quality of saliva you're more prone to cavities.

### **Fungal Infections**

The human mouth naturally contains bacteria, viruses and fungi that are typically kept in check by the immune system and oral hygiene. Sometimes, the fungi can proliferate and cause oral candidiasis, which is more common among people with diabetes. Excessive glucose levels in saliva feed certain fungi, especially yeast. This creates

ideal conditions for fungal infections, such as thrush. Thrush produces white or red patches in the mouth that may be sore or may become ulcers. It can also attack the tongue or cause difficulty in swallowing and tasting food.

Prevention is the best defense against the oral health complications that can arise from diabetes. If you have been diagnosed, proper oral health care and regular visits to your dentist are absolutely vital. If it's time for a checkup, call today to make an appointment with us.

