Today's older adults are keeping their natural teeth longer. It's all thanks to scientific developments and the dental industry's emphasis on prevention. Here are some tips and information to help you keep your teeth and gums healthy.

**Dental challenges as you grow older but wiser.***

While adults of all ages can have cavities, seniors can face unique dental challenges, such as:

- Increased risk of developing decay around older fillings, and decay of the tooth root itself, if the gum tissue has receded.
- Plaque may build up faster and in greater amounts.
- Reduced dexterity and mobility may make daily oral hygiene habits more difficult.
- Medical or mental conditions may present additional challenges to maintaining or receiving regular care.
- Vision or hearing loss may reduce a patient's ability to cope with stress or to communicate clearly.

**Good nutrition can keep your body and your teeth strong.**

Good nutrition is important for everyone, but many older adults don’t eat balanced diets, which can affect their teeth. Some people avoid certain foods because they have trouble chewing or swallowing due to painful teeth, ill-fitting dentures, dry mouth or changes in facial muscles. Others find their sense of taste has changed, sometimes due to disease or certain medications. The key is to choose healthy foods you can eat and enjoy.

**Xerostomia (dry mouth) may not be a normal consequence of aging.***

Side effects from medications are the most common cause of dry mouth, but it may also be the first sign of a health problem or disease. Talk with your dentist if you have dry mouth.

**You don't have to live with toothaches or bleeding gums.**

Gum disease continues to be a threat to seniors. Lack of awareness about available treatments and techniques may lead them to make false assumptions about their dental health. And they may tolerate conditions such as toothaches and bleeding gums. To help meet this challenge, dentists are becoming more proactive as the number of older patients increases.*

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*SMILE THROUGH YOUR GOLDEN YEARS
Keep your teeth and gums healthy.*

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Together, all the way.*
Dental dos and don’ts:

- Don’t skip routine dental care. Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams.
- Don’t smoke. Smoking or chewing tobacco increases the risk of periodontal disease.
- Do brush your teeth at least twice a day.
- Do clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner.
- Do replace your toothbrush every three or four months or sooner if the bristles become frayed. A worn toothbrush will not do a good job of cleaning your teeth.
- Do watch your diet. Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks.

Together, you and your dentist can keep your teeth happy at every age.

Good oral hygiene and regular dental care are important whatever your age. Even if you no longer have your natural teeth, you should see your dentist regularly. He or she will check to see if there are any problems with the soft tissues in your mouth (for example: your gum ridges and tongue). Your jaw joints can also be evaluated along with an oral cancer screening.*


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