



As our society continues to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to practice good oral hygiene to help prevent you and your family from getting sick. While oral hygiene may not be at the top of people's minds right now, we know gum health is closely linked to immune system health – and we know that a compromised immune system can put someone at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

To maintain good oral health, follow the basics of good hygiene:

- Brush daily with a fluoride toothpaste: last thing at night and at least one other time during the day
- Drink plenty of water and reduce the amount of sugary food and drinks you consume
- Clean between your teeth every day with interdental brushes or floss
- Consider using non-alcohol mouthwash
- Avoid smoking and vaping
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Discard your toothbrush after any illness
- Replace your toothbrush at least every 3 months

Also, research concludes that the lack of sleep<sup>1</sup> as well as anxiety and stress have a negative impact on oral health<sup>2</sup>. During this pandemic, maintaining both good sleep habits and mental health may be more difficult to achieve.

It is recommended that an adult should try to obtain 6-7 hours<sup>3</sup> of sleep daily. To relieve anxiety and stress, activities such as walking, meditation and yoga are suggested.

To seek care and guidance about dental, medical or behavior health concerns, Telehealth (Medical, Oral Health and Behavior Health) is now available to keep you healthy. Call your providers for more information on their telehealth options, or visit the Telehealth Virtual Resource Center at [https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit\\_telemedicine/hit\\_telemedicine.aspx](https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit_telemedicine/hit_telemedicine.aspx).<sup>4 5</sup>

Keep calm and take care of your teeth!

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<sup>1</sup> Karaaslan F<sup>1</sup>, Dikilitaş A<sup>1</sup>:The association between stage-grade of periodontitis and sleep quality and oral health-related quality of life. *J Periodontol*. 2019 Oct;90(10):1133-1141. doi: 10.1002/JPER.19-0034. Epub 2019 May 27.

<sup>2</sup> Coelho JMF, Miranda SS, da Cruz SS, Trindade SC, Passos-Soares JS, Cerqueira EMM, Costa MDCN, Figueiredo ACMG, Hintz AM, Barreto ML, Seymour GJ, Scannapieco F, Gomes-Filho. *Is there association between stress and periodontitis?* *Clin Oral Investig*. 2019 Oct 25. doi: 10.1007/s00784-019-03083-9.

<sup>3</sup> Carra MC, Schmitt A, Thomas F, Danchin N, Pannier B, Bouchard P.:*Sleep disorders and oral health: a cross-sectional study*. *Clin Oral Investig*. 2017 May;21(4):975-983. doi: 10.1007/s00784-016-1851-y. Epub 2016 May 13.

<sup>4</sup> Telehealth Virtual Resource Center: [https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit\\_telemedicine/hit\\_telemedicine.aspx](https://mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit_telemedicine/hit_telemedicine.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners Telehealth and Dentistry: <https://health.maryland.gov/dental/Documents/Bulletin%20-%20Telehealth%20Law%20Summary%20-%20April%202020,%202020.pdf>