



## Beyond Brushing and Flossing: 3 Ways to Boost Your Oral Health

You can't argue it: Brushing and flossing are two of the best ways to maintain your oral health between routine dentist visits. But if you're looking to boost your dental health regimen in other ways, these three simple tips will do the trick.

- 1. Add Fluoride Mouthwash to Your Oral Health Routine:** After brushing and flossing, swishing some mouthwash around your mouth can improve your oral health in several ways. It remineralizes teeth, cleans hard-to-reach areas and lowers acid levels in your mouth. Just make sure to buy mouthwash that contains fluoride to get all these benefits. Also, talk to your dentist for good product recommendations based on your specific needs (if you have tooth sensitivity, for instance).
- 2. Drink Water After Every Meal:** When it comes to keeping your teeth clean between brushes, few things are as effective and simple as a swish of water after meals. Water washes away lingering food—and while you may think juice or soda are just as good at doing that, remember that those beverages contain bacteria-loving sugar. Water also reduces acid left behind by some foods, which protects your enamel.
- 3. Ditch the Toothpick:** Using a toothpick seems like a good idea: You can pick food out between your teeth after meals. While toothpicks may be helpful to remove a stubborn piece of food, remember that they are sharp enough to injure your gums and are not a replacement for dental floss. To clean between your teeth in a pinch, keep floss in your purse or car for easy access.

While none of these ideas replaces twice daily brushing and flossing, they add additional cleaning and protection that your dentist is sure to notice at your next appointment.

### Sources

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/dental/art-20045536>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/dental-and-oral-health/best-practices-for-healthy-teeth#3>

<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/nutrition/food-tips/water-best-beverage>

## Take Full Advantage of Your Preventive Dental Benefits

Do you know the full range of preventive dental services included in your DeltaDental of Iowa plan? Many people don't—so they don't take advantage of them. As you kick off another new year, take a few minutes to look at your dental coverage. You may discover important benefits you're leaving on the table.

Why is preventive care so important? Regularly visiting your dentist means any small issues are addressed when they're small. Small problems usually require less invasive and expensive treatments, and some need only a few minor lifestyle adjustments to correct (like adding flossing to your daily routine, for instance). In short, preventive dental services help keep big dental problems from happening.

### What Are Preventive Dental Services?

Routine oral health exams, X-rays, dental cleanings, sealants, dental health education and fluoride treatments all fall under the umbrella of preventive dental services. These services are designed to prevent or minimize dental problems. For example, during your routine dental visit, your dental hygienist may demonstrate how you should properly floss. This is intended to help prevent the formation of tooth decay and gum disease.

What services are not considered preventive care? Common examples include fillings, root canals, extractions and resin restorations.



### 2 Ways to Find Out What's Covered

You can't take full advantage of your preventive dental health benefits without knowing what's covered by your plan. Before you make your next dentist appointment, check what services are included in your coverage. Delta Dental of Iowa has two easy ways for you to get the information you need:

- 1)** Login or create a Delta Dental Member Connection account. Once you're logged in, you'll be able to see the list of dental benefits included in your specific plan.
- 2)** Call Delta Dental of Iowa customer service at 1-800-544-0718 to speak with a representative about the preventive services your benefits cover.

And, finally, if you need help finding an in-network dentist, our provider search tool is a great place to find dentists near you who accept Delta Dental of Iowa.

Good dental and overall health begins with preventive care. Using all the preventive benefits included in your Delta Dental of Iowa plan will help keep you healthy throughout the year and beyond.