

# Oral health

## A healthy mouth is important for your health and wellbeing.

Healthy teeth and gums play an important part in your quality of life, helping you smile, speak, eat, socialise and feel good about yourself.

Tooth loss, poorly fitting dentures and oral infections can lead to poor nutrition, ongoing mouth pain and can complicate medical management of health illnesses, such as diabetes, heart and respiratory diseases.

## There are four easy ways to maintain a healthy mouth.

### 1. Brush your teeth morning and night

- Use a soft bristled toothbrush on your gums, tongue and teeth.
- Spit out toothpaste but do not rinse your mouth after brushing your teeth. Leaving toothpaste in your mouth helps protect your teeth.
- Floss once per day.



### 2. Eat healthy foods

Enjoy a wide variety of healthy foods from the five food groups every day. Eat crunchy fruit and veggies like apples, celery and carrots. Slicing these foods can make them easier to eat.



Some of the content in this fact sheet is based on material provided by the Centre for Oral Health Strategy, NSW Ministry of Health.

### 3. Choose water as a drink

- Drink water during and after meals and snacks, and after taking medications (especially if they have been crushed and mixed with a sweetener).
- Keep your mouth moist by frequently rinsing with water or sipping water.



### 4. Have a regular dental check up

Visit a dental practitioner regularly. Everyone has different needs: talk with your dental practitioner about how frequently you need to visit for a check-up.



## Dentures

People who wear dentures can be at risk of developing fungal infections.

- Clean your dentures in the morning and at night.
- Use mild liquid soap on a soft bristled toothbrush.
- Clean your gums and tongue using a soft bristled toothbrush and water.
- Keep your dentures in a dry container overnight.



### Tip

To access NSW Public Dental Services call: 1800 679 336 or visit [www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/oralhealth)

NSW Public Dental Services provide free general dental care for adults holding one of the following Australian Government concession cards:

- Pensioner Concession Card
- Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Senior Health Card









# Vision

Foods we eat affect our overall health and can also affect the health of our eyes.

A balanced diet provides essential antioxidants that support good eye health.

Antioxidants are important for our eyes and are found in a wide variety of foods.

Food sources	Antioxidants
 Salmon, mackerel and sardines	<b>Omega-3</b>
 Citrus fruits, berries, broccoli and capsicum	<b>Vitamin C</b>
 Leafy green vegetables, kale, peas, spinach and broccoli	<b>Lutein and Zeaxanthin</b>
 Lean meat, shellfish, legumes and seeds	<b>Zinc</b>
 Nuts and seeds	<b>Vitamin E</b>
 Lean meat, leafy green vegetables and beans	<b>Vitamin A</b>

## ★ Tip

Good eating habits combined with regular physical activity helps to prevent diabetes, which is a significant cause of vision loss in Australia.

## Eye Conditions

Eye conditions such as macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, and diabetic retinopathy impair vision. Impaired vision can increase your risk of falling as it is harder for you to see hazards such as obstacles, uneven footpaths, edges of steps or objects, and wet surfaces.



## Signs that your eyesight may be changing

- Clouding or opaque vision
- Decreased colour vision
- Distorted vision
- Double vision
- Sudden eye pain, discomfort or redness
- Reduced ability to adjust to light changes

## ★ Tip

If you notice any changes to your eyesight, seek help from a qualified health professional.

## Things to consider

- Have regular eye checks. Adults over 65 can get a yearly eye check through Medicare. Adults under 65 can get an eye check through Medicare every three years.
- Talk to your doctor about cataracts. If you have cataracts, arrange to have them removed as soon as recommended.
- New glasses will take time to adjust to. Be extra careful when walking and moving around while wearing new glasses.
- Bifocal and multifocal lens glasses make it harder to judge distance and position of kerbs and steps. Consider using a pair of single lens glasses for walking and take care when using steps.
- Wear sunglasses and a hat to reduce glare when outside.
- Give your eyes time to adjust when moving between well-lit and poorly-lit areas.

## ★ Tip

The Amsler grid is a tool that you can use to detect some vision problems. You can order a free Amsler Grid at [www.mdffoundation.com.au](http://www.mdffoundation.com.au).