

HOW SHOULD I KEEP MY TEETH HEALTHY DURING COVID-19?



With many families working and learning from home and adjusting to new routines, it's easy to put aside our dental health. Here are a few tips from **Cardinal Care Smiles** and the Virginia Health Catalyst to help keep your teeth healthy at home:

- + **Wash your hands** – aim for at least 20 seconds before and after brushing and flossing
- + **Brush at least twice a day** – be sure to get those hard-to-reach spots
- + **Floss once a day** – this helps remove bacteria and plaque in places your toothbrush can't reach
- + **Eat a well-balanced diet** – limit sticky, sugary snacks like cake and cookies
- + **Limit snacking** – snacking often increases your risk of cavities
- + **Limit sugary drinks** – soda and fruit juices can harm tooth surfaces
- + **Drink plenty of water** – drink water with meals and between meals
- + **Avoid smoking** – smoking limits blood flow to your mouth, making it easier for bacteria to grow
- + **Replace your toothbrush** – every 3 months, and don't let your toothbrush touch other toothbrushes. Replace it more often if you have been sick.
- + **Use a toothpaste with fluoride** – it can strengthen and protect your teeth

Here are some things you may see when you go to the dentist:

- The dentist office may look different, some changes you might see include having your temperature taken before your appointment, wearing a mask in the building and staying 6 feet apart.
- Your dentist may call you before the appointment to ask a few questions about your or your family member's health. Answer the questions to the best of your ability and stay home if you are feeling sick.
- Your dentist may first talk with you over the phone or through a video call. Many dentists in Virginia are able to see patients right now from the safety of your home. This new means of practicing is called Telehealth/Teledentistry.

Call your dentist if you have a dental emergency, like bad tooth pain, swollen gums or face, bleeding in the mouth that does not stop or trauma to the face.

Resources to Know

Need to find a dentist that accepts Medicaid?

Use the Find a Dentist tool on [DentaQuest.com](https://dentaquest.com) to find a provider near you or call member services at 1-888-912-3456.

Virginia Health Care Foundation: <https://bit.ly/VHCFDental>

Virginia Dental Association: <https://bit.ly/VDADental>

Have questions about COVID-19? Call the Virginia Department of Health hotline: 1-877-ASK-VDH3