

## Add a new toothbrush to your spring cleaning list

Mops and other cleaning supplies are just a few things that come to mind when you think about spring cleaning. But have you thought about a new toothbrush to freshen up your brushing routine?

Brushing your teeth reduces the plaque that causes gum disease and tooth decay, and a worn toothbrush won't do a good job of cleaning. The American Dental Association recommends changing your toothbrush every three months – sooner if bristles look worn, or you've had a cold, sore throat, or flu. You may need to replace children's toothbrushes more often.

### Here are some tips on toothbrush care from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- › Don't share toothbrushes, which may increase the risk for infections
- › Thoroughly rinse your toothbrush with tap water after brushing to remove toothpaste and debris, allow it to air-dry, and store it in an upright position
- › Make sure toothbrushes stored in the same holder don't touch, clean the holder often
- › Avoid routinely covering toothbrushes or storing them in closed containers, which promotes bacterial growth
- › Disinfecting toothbrushes isn't necessary

### House-cleaning tip:

Give your old toothbrush new life by using it to clean hard-to-reach spaces such as grout and to brush away build-up around faucets.

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## Sour candies can have a lasting effect on your teeth

Walk down any candy aisle and you'll find shelves of "extreme" or intense sour and fruit-flavor candies. While the craze is popular with young children, experts say it could have a lasting effect on their teeth. Extremely sour candies are high in acids that can strip away teeth's protective surface, according to the Minnesota Dental Association.

### Here's some advice when eating sour candies:

- › **Rinse right away.** Swishing water in your mouth after eating a candy helps wash away the acid.
- › **Wait 30 minutes to brush.** The acid of a sour candy softens the fragile surface of the teeth. Brushing immediately could cause damage.
- › **Skip fruit flavors.** Lemon, grape, and cherry destroy more enamel than cinnamon and mint, which are lower in acid.
- › **Switch to sugar-free gum.** It can satisfy your oral urge while stimulating saliva flow, which protects enamel.

## What's your dental IQ?

You brush your teeth and floss daily, and have regular dental checkups. What more can you do to improve your oral health? To find out, go to **MyDentalIQ.com** and take the dental risk assessment. Find out instantly how you can improve your oral and overall health based on your responses to questions about your family history, general health, daily routine, and eating habits.

## Your child's first tooth

A child's first baby tooth is just as important as his or her permanent adult teeth and needs dental care. Around 6 months of age, the first tooth will appear. You'll want to wipe the tooth and the gums with a clean gauze pad or cloth. Floss when two teeth begin to touch. The American Dental Association suggests you take your baby to the dentist within six months of the first tooth, but no later than the first birthday.

## Online tools help you understand your benefits

Learn more about your dental plan at **HumanaDental.com**. Simply register to create your *MyHumana* account, the secured member page giving you access to useful information about your dental plan.

### You can:

- › Learn more about covered treatments such as cleanings and sealants
- › See how often you can have the services, and the next date you're eligible for the services
- › Verify if any specific age limits apply to services
- › Check the status of a claim
- › Order replacement member ID cards

