WHY VISIT THE DENTIST?

Regular dental visits and cleanings can help prevent costly services in the future.

Below, review some of the many reasons why professional dental care is important to oral and overall health.

> **Detect cavities early:** Your dentist can examine your teeth for cavities (caries) to help find them while they're still minor and relatively inexpensive to treat.

> **Detect gum disease early:** Many people with gum disease do not even realize they have it.

> **Detect oral cancer early:** Your dentist can examine your mouth for any irregularities that may indicate oral cancer before it becomes advanced. This is especially important for individuals that smoke or chew tobacco.

> **Check your teeth:** Your dentist can examine your teeth and existing fillings/crowns for surrounding decay or to determine whether any have become defective.

> **Avoid/treat bad breath or dry mouth:** Your dentist may identify and treat oral conditions that may increase your risk for these problems.

> **Review oral hygiene routines:** Your dentist and hygienist can help you establish and maintain good oral health habits at home.

Common, preventable conditions. Your dentist can help you fight them.

Tooth decay
A wearing down of tooth enamel that occurs when plaque is not cleaned off of your teeth. Bacteria that live in the mouth already produce acids as a result. Over time, these acids can destroy tooth enamel, resulting in tooth decay.

Gum disease
Also called periodontal disease, a disease caused when bacteria builds up and begins to destroy the gum and bone that support your teeth.

Gingivitis
A milder form of gum disease that only affects the gums. But gingivitis may lead to more serious, destructive forms of gum disease called periodontitis.

Together, all the way.®

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❯ **Protect your overall health:** Research shows potential associations between gum disease and overall health conditions, including heart disease and diabetes.*

❯ **Protect the oral health of your family:** Tooth decay is one of the most common chronic infectious diseases among U.S. children.

  – 42% of two to 11-year-old children have at least one cavity or filling**

  – 23% of two to 11-year-old children have untreated dental cavities**

  – 21% of six to 11-year-old children have cavities in their permanent teeth**