

Dental Prescription Follow the Recipe for a Healthy Smile

By Terry Bawel

Let's face it – we all want a beautiful smile. But has anyone ever told you that to achieve a beautiful smile, you ultimately need to have a healthy smile? Thanks to employers that have integrated oral health into their wellness culture and to dentists who provide the dental care, Dental Health Options by Health Resource Inc.

has had the opportunity to bring healthy smiles to employees for over 25 years. Here is our simple recipe, including active ingredients and easy steps to help you make and take care of your healthy smile!



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Ingredients

- 2 visits to your dentist each year for greater oral health and disease detection
- 4 readily available, preventive dental tools
- 11 super-smile, motivator foods
- 1 employee-focused, value-driven, preventive model dental benefit plan

Directions

Mixing healthy ingredients and lifestyle are the makings for any wholesome, successful health/wellness initiative or culture. A healthy smile and mouth (and what goes into it) oftentimes are the first step toward your health. Your dentist will work with you to thwart future health issues and costs through early detection and simple processes and treatments. By also whisking in the following three dental preventive key steps, you can truly spice up your smile and enhance your overall health:

1. **Early disease detection.** Some of the earliest signs of diabetes, cancer, pregnancy complications, immune disorders, hormone imbalances, teen-age eating disorders and drug dependency issues show up in the gums, teeth and tongue – sometimes long before patients or parents know anything is wrong. The International Centre for Oral-Systemic Health has data showing a direct correlation between inflammation in the mouth and inflammation in the body, citing that over 200 diseases may be detected through changes in the mouth. Additionally, public health statistics indicate over 20 million adults and children saw a dentist last year, but not a physician. Who would have guessed that a routine visit to your dentist might improve the chance of early detection of a potential life-threatening disease?
2. **Preventive care/tools are the active ingredients.** Preventive dental care – consisting of an evaluation, a professional cleaning, x-rays of the teeth and bone, potentially a fluoride treatment based on your risk assessment and children's sealants for candy-prone years – can account for as much as 80% of the claims to a dental plan. Many dentists and their hygienists also offer home care guidance to their patients based directly on the oral health of their mouth. The vast majority of dental supplies available over the counter (toothbrush, paste, floss, fluoride rinse) are preventive devices. (In contrast, there are aisles and aisles of products geared toward medical conditions that only treat symptoms, but do not prevent the core cause). Keep your pantry stocked with these important ingredients.
3. **Food motivators.** Did you know that certain foods can naturally cleanse and whiten your teeth, fight harmful bacteria or even prevent enamel erosion? At right are several of the most popular foods to keep your smile healthy. A more comprehensive food listing, including nutrient-packed recipes is available at www.AACD.com.

Serve immediately and enjoy your SMILE!

This recipe provides unlimited servings of happy, healthy employees who are far more likely to make positive impacts to their workplace and personal lives.

Nutritional bonus: A healthy smile is a lifetime gift to give to oneself and others.

Friendly Foods

- **Lemon:** a natural tooth “whitener” and assists with PH balance in the body.
- **Kiwi:** this fruit packs more vitamin C than any other fruit. A lack of vitamin C can break down the collagen in your gums, making them tender and more susceptible to bacteria and gum disease.
- **Basil:** a natural antibiotic; reduces bacteria in the mouth.
- **Green tea:** contains an antioxidant called catechin, which reduces bacteria growth that causes gingivitis.
- **Ginger:** an anti-inflammatory to support healthy mouth tissue.
- **Stevia:** a natural sweetener; no “acid effect” on teeth like sugar.
- **Broccoli:** forms an acid-resistant film on teeth that can help prevent enamel erosion.
- **Carrots:** full of vitamin A, which is necessary for the formation of tooth enamel. This and all crunchy vegetables also cleanse and stimulate gums.
- **Cheese:** offers the benefit of lactic acid to help prevent tooth decay.
- **Pineapple:** helps you produce extra saliva. Combine that with citric acid and you have an all-natural bacteria fighting mouthwash.
- **Xylitol:** a sugar substitute that studies show prevents tooth decay. It is very beneficial in gum and hard candy form.

INFORMATION LINK

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