



Dental Care
GUIDE



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Dentist Visit FAQs

Optimal oral health has more to do with promoting healthy mouths — it impacts the integrity of our entire bodies.

Many Americans brush off visits with their dentist because cleanings and corrections often mean discomfort. If you have been avoiding this important part of your health-care routine, it's likely you have several questions or concerns about what happens at the office. To ease your mind and find the motivation to schedule an appointment, learn what to expect and discover the answers to

some of the most common questions about visiting the dentist, per the American Dental Association.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I VISIT?

There is no correct answer to how often you should schedule an appointment as everyone is different. Depending on the level of your oral health, a professional may choose to see you annually or in some cases, biannually. The easiest way to find the answer is to create an initial meeting so your health can be assessed.

HOW DO I FIND A DENTIST?

A great way to discover the perfect place for your smile is to ask for referrals from friends and families. It is also a good idea to check with other

health care professionals you visit; they can provide referrals to a quality dentist in your area.

Consider the following when choosing the perfect office for your lifestyle.

- Are appointment times convenient to your work and personal schedule?
- Is the office easy to get to from places you frequent, like your home or office?
- Is the dentist willing to explain techniques which can help you and clearly discuss the state of your oral health?

Finding the care that is right for you may take a little research and a few meetings, but by asking the right questions, you will be on your way to

conquering your oral health.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AT A CHECKUP?

After a visual examination, a dentist or hygienist will determine if X-rays are necessary. They will likely inspect gums for disease or damage before conducting an oral cancer screening. This procedure is as simple as holding your tongue and analyzing your mouth, jaw and neck.

DO I NEED A DENTIST IF THERE ARE NO SYMPTOMS?

Yes. The easiest way to catch problems before they cause discomfort or damage is by following a rigorous schedule based on your dentist's recommendation.

Dental Erosion Basics

Your smile is the front door to your body; the first thing many people notice and often judge. Regular trips to the dentist are the best way to ensure your oral health is at its best, but sometimes daily habits sabotage our mouths.

Learn the effects of enamel erosion and the steps you can take to prevent the condition in between visits to the dentist.

The Oral Health Foundation defines dental erosion as the loss of tooth enamel caused by acid attack. Enamel is the shell of the tooth which acts as a protective layer of sensitive dentine beneath. As teeth begin succumbing to erosion, it's common for them to appear stained or yellow. This is because the white coating of enamel is wearing down and the paler dentine is becoming more prevalent.

CAUSES OF EROSION

It may surprise you that each time you ingest something acidic, tooth enamel becomes softer for a period. Eventually, saliva will begin to balance the acid content and it will return to its normal

state. The problems begin when the attacks happen too often and your mouth doesn't have enough time to repair itself, causing small amounts of enamel to be brushed away.

Here are some tips from the OHF that you can use to prevent the issue from becoming a serious problem:

- Chew sugar-free gum after meals, especially if you cannot brush right away.
- When consuming acidic drinks, avoid swishing it in your mouth. Use a straw to help them reach the back of your mouth without contacting teeth.
- Finish meals with cheese or milk to balance acids from other items.

TREATMENTS

For the best results, dental erosion should be addressed at the first sign of trouble. Usually, a dentist can simply apply a filing to a tooth and repair the damage. However, if the problem persists, the only option may be replacing

damaged teeth with veneer.

Usually, regular check-ups and advice from a dental team can create a solution before the issue is able to cause any permanent damage. Don't be afraid to contact your professional if you suspect you are suffering from the early stages of dental erosion.



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Experts in Dental Care

When you think of oral health, you probably think of scheduling appointments with your dentist. There are several types of experts who specialize in different conditions in the dental field. It is important to know which professionals to seek for your specific situation.

ORAL AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGEON

These specialists are required to complete four additional years of hospital-based training after dental school. The additional lessons focus on diagnosing and treating conditions in the face, mouth and jaw.

The University of Rochester Medical Center reports that these experts are efficient in procedures like:

- Dental implants and associated bone grafting or soft tissue grafting.
- Outpatient anesthesia.
- Removal of tumors and growths from the jaws and mouth.
- Jaw reconstruction.

Their knowledge is vast, and an appointment can be beneficial if you fear you require serious attention.

ORAL PATHOLOGIST

While they typically don't provide direct patient care, an expert in pathology researches and diagnoses diseases which begin orally. The American Dental Education Association states the career typically requires 37 months of lessons. They will work close with dentists to

perform biopsies and radiographic or microscopic examinations.

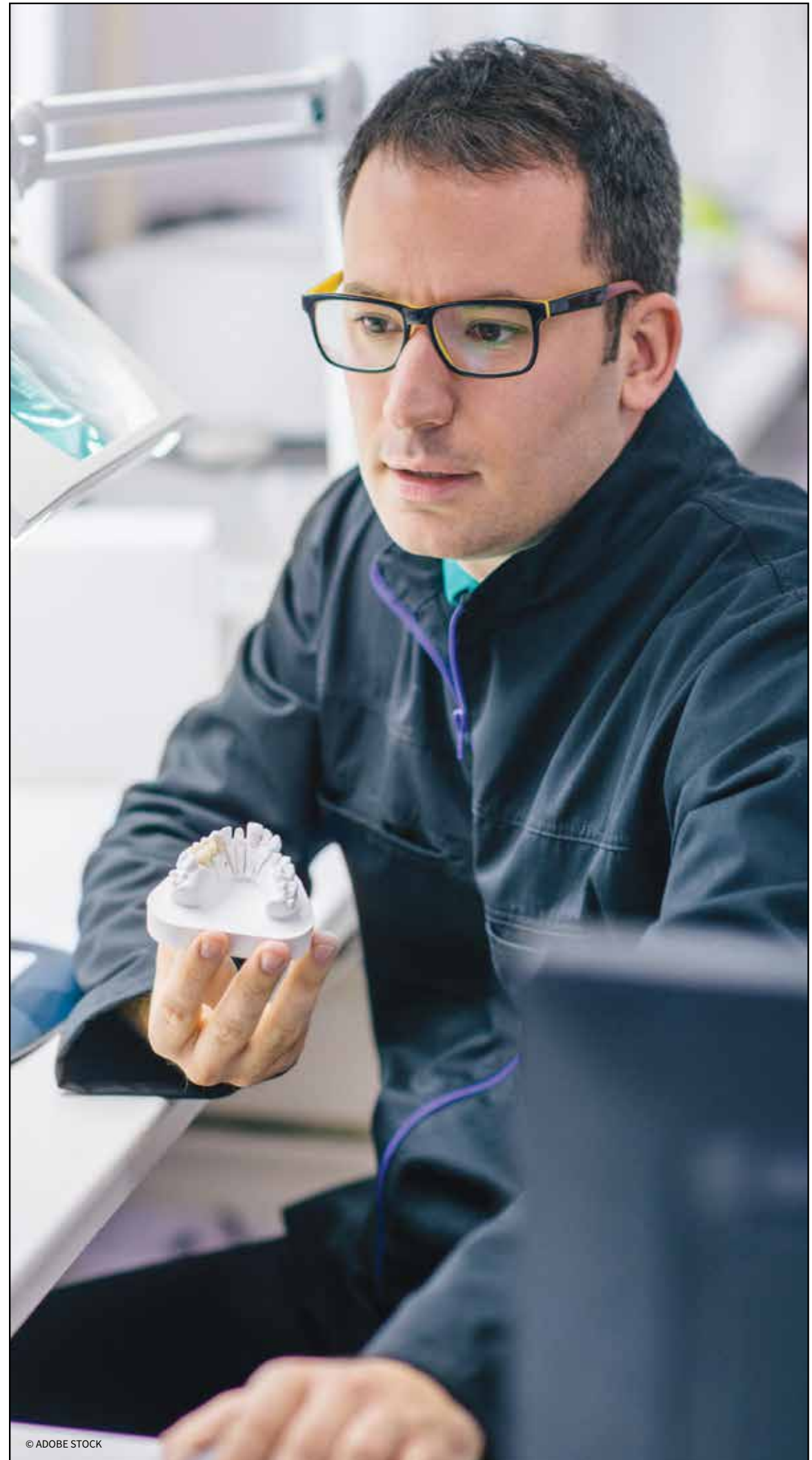
ORTHODONTIST

Another aspect of proper oral health is the straightening of teeth, correcting over- or underbites and closing gaps. This is best achieved by another specialist – an orthodontist. Certain issues with the jaw are also better left to these professionals as their training prepares them to provide the most effective treatment.

PROSTHODONTIST

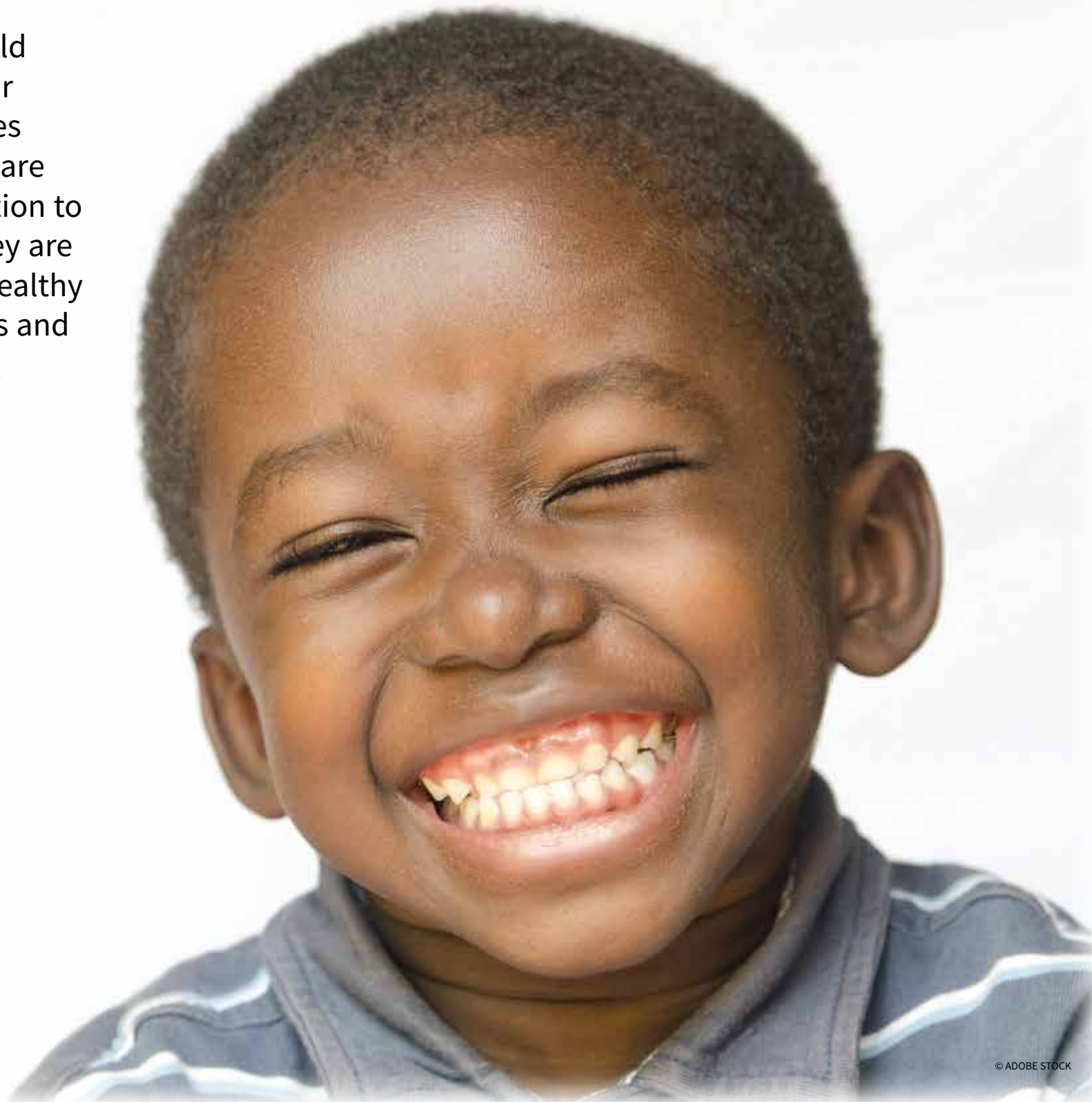
According to the American College of Prosthodontists, prosthodontics is defined as the diagnosis, treatment planning, rehabilitation and maintenance of the oral function, comfort, appearance and health of patients with missing or deficient teeth.

Specialists in this field have advanced training in restoring or replacing teeth with cutting-edge technology. They sometimes work closely with general dentists to determine a patient's best course of action.



Caring For Baby Teeth

The child in your life requires constant care and attention to ensure they are meeting healthy milestones and advancing properly.



our shots and chewing food, they serve a purpose to hold the space while their permanent teeth are growing beneath gums. Premature loss of a baby tooth can rush a permanent tooth, causing it to push into the empty space. This can cause problems in the future as other adult teeth will have difficulty making room as they settle.

CARING FOR BABY TEETH

Even before baby teeth come in, it's advisable to begin cleaning your baby's gums with a clean, moist gauze pad or washcloth. Here are some tips from the ADA on proper care once teeth start arriving.

- When children are younger than three, begin brushing with small amounts of fluoride toothpaste; a smear about the size of a grain of rice will suffice. Brush twice a day or as otherwise directed by their dentist.

- From three to six, teeth should be brushed twice a day with a pea-sized drop of fluoride toothpaste. Monitor them to ensure they don't swallow without rinsing.

- Continue these techniques until you notice teeth are beginning to touch, then practice flossing or cleaning between them daily.

DANGERS OF PACIFIERS

For some children (and parents) a pacifier can be a saving grace. It can provide a sense of comfort and a source of happiness, but prolonged use can sabotage dental health. To lessen the risks associated with "pacifier mouth," the American Academy of Family Physicians recommend weaning them off this type of aide before they reach 2 years of age.

According to the American Dental Association, baby teeth will typically begin showing around the ages of

six months to a year. Then it's time to visit with a pediatric dentist.

Here are some beneficial

guidelines and information to get your kiddo on the right path toward proper dental health, per the ADA.

IMPORTANCE OF BABY TEETH

Our baby's teeth aren't only important for adorable glam-