



Dental check-ups go beyond your smile

Visiting your dentist twice a year for regular check-ups and cleanings is one of the most important factors in maintaining good oral health. Many common disorders and diseases show up in the mouth—sometimes before you even know there's a health problem. Your dentist may be able to spot the following during a normal dental exam:

Oral cancer: Lesions in the mouth can be a sign of oral cancer.

Heart disease: Inflamed gums and loose or missing teeth can be signs of heart disease.

High blood pressure: Red, swollen gums can indicate high blood pressure.

Osteoporosis: Accelerated bone loss around teeth may be due to systemic factors associated with osteoporosis.

Acid reflux: Erosion of the enamel on the back of teeth can indicate acid reflux.

Diabetes: Discolored gums that pull away from the teeth, bad breath, and dry mouth can signal diabetes.

Sleep apnea: Dry mouth, red inflamed gums, and increased rate of decay or wear on the teeth can signal sleep apnea.

Kidney disease: Sweet-smelling breath can be a sign of kidney disease.

Anemia: A smooth, flat tongue could indicate iron-deficiency anemia. Dark red patches on the underside of the tongue may indicate pernicious anemia, a vitamin B12 deficiency.

Crohn's disease: Swelling and lesions in the mouth are an early sign of Crohn's disease, an inflammatory bowel disorder.