

Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey understands that a healthy and beautiful smile is important, especially for teenagers.



## Oral Health and Teenagers

**Between busy schedules, poor eating habits and contact sports, teens can be rough on their teeth.**

Not surprisingly, many teens develop a lot of cavities. At the same time, many teens are very concerned with and sensitive about their appearance, making proper dental care all the more important.

If you are a parent, talk to your teenager about taking care of his/her teeth. Help your teenager understand that poor oral hygiene can lead to bad breath, teeth stains, missing teeth and other dental problems. Regardless of how hectic school, social and work schedules may be, there is always time for proper oral hygiene.

Also, strive to set a good example. As the old adage goes, "Practice what you preach." If your teenager sees that you take good care of your teeth by getting regular checkups, it reinforces your message.

Eating habits can also play a large role in oral health care. Limiting junk food and soda consumption helps lessen the possibility of tooth decay. Snacks like fresh fruits and vegetables are a good alternative.

Teens should always speak to their dentist and/or physician to determine which courses of treatment are right for them.

Encourage your teenager to speak with a dentist about proper oral care.

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# Tips to maintain a healthy smile

- Eat smart and healthy.
- Brush and floss daily.
- Keep up with regular dental check-ups.
- Don't smoke or chew tobacco.
- Wear a mouth guard for any sports or activity in which your mouth can be hit.
- Always wear a seat belt to avoid injuring your teeth in the event of an accident.

Be sure to visit your dentist regularly ...  
it can improve your overall health.

Sources: American Dental Association  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services