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Episode 13: 4 Keys to Optimum Dental Health_013 (Bonus Episode)

Hello everyone. You are listening to a special episode of THIS OLD TOOTH, a podcast devoted to providing you with honest agenda-free information about how you can get and keep a beautiful healthy smile for life. I am your host, Dr. Lisa Germain. Today's special recording is to let you know that October is National Dental Hygiene Month, so I just wanted to take the opportunity to talk about the four essential things that you need to do to keep your mouth healthy. The first thing is to brush with a soft-bristle toothbrush twice a day for two minutes. The size and shape of your brush should fit your mouth, allowing you to reach all areas easily. The proper brushing technique is to place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to your gums. Gently move the brush back and forth in short tooth-wide strokes, brush the outer surfaces, the inner surfaces and the chewing surfaces of your teeth.

Then to clean the inside surfaces of your front teeth, fit the brush vertically and make several up and down strokes. And don't forget to brush your tongue to remove bacteria and to prevent bad breath as well. The second essential element to a healthy smile is to floss your teeth once a day. Flossing removes the plaque and bacteria that accumulates between your teeth, which you can't remove with brushing alone. Plaque can eventually harden into calculus or tartar, and if that happens, you can't get it off by yourself. It has to be removed by your dental hygienist or your dentist. Number three, rinse because teeth alone account for less than half of the mouth rinsing can help eliminate biofilm and bacteria that brushing and flossing cannot. Rinsing often along with brushing and flossing may help reduce the chance of dental decay and infection. However, please avoid rinses that have alcohol in them because mouthwashes that contain alcohol can dry your mouth out and that can increase your likelihood of getting tooth decay as well.

And last number four. Clinical studies have shown that chewing sugarless gum with xylitol for 20 minutes following meals can help prevent tooth decay. The chewing of sugarless gum increases the flow of saliva which washes away food and other debris, neutralizes acids produced by bacteria in the mouth and provides disease-fighting substances throughout your mouth. And here's a tip on how to get your kids to brush. Teach them young when habits are most likely to form. And by setting a good example, kids love

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to imitate their parents and if they see you devoting the care and attention to your teeth that you need to keep a beautiful healthy smile, they will do the same. I will be back with a regularly scheduled episode on Thursday where I will continue my series on bad breath. In that episode, I will discuss how ketogenic diets cause your breath to smell like cat pee and what you can do about it. And now I have a special request. Will you follow me on Instagram please @ this old tooth? I am trying to figure out how to do Instagram stories and I would love your feedback and advice. That's it for now. So until Thursday, thank you for listening and remember, be true to your teeth or they will be false to you.

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