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## Ounce of prevention (1966)

American Dental Association

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AMERICAN  
DENTAL ASSOCIATION

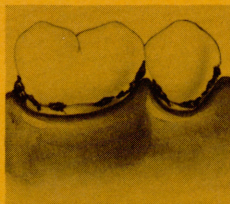
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DALLAS, TEXAS

Try as hard as you will, you cannot keep your teeth clean by brushing alone. Over a period of time stains and calculus (tartar) will accumulate on your teeth. As often as your dentist suggests is necessary, he or a dental hygienist, using special instruments, should give your teeth a prophylaxis or professional cleaning.

Having your teeth cleaned periodically is important for both your health and your appearance. The removal of stains and deposits helps ensure the health of your gums and the bones supporting your teeth and makes your smile more attractive.

The amount of calculus that forms on the teeth varies from person to person. Conscientious brushing slows but cannot entirely prevent the formation of calculus.

Calculus is a hard, crust-like material. It forms where the gums and the crowns of the teeth meet and under the gums. It is composed of minerals



from the saliva, bacteria and other substances normally found in the mouth. Once calculus has formed, only a dentist or a dental hygienist can remove it, with the aid of special instruments.

If calculus is not removed, it collects more bacteria. The bacteria eventually irritate the gums. As the gums become infected, they begin to recede and leave pockets of infection which continue to destroy the tissue.

As periodontal disease progresses, not only the gums are destroyed but the underlying tissue and bone as well. It is at this point that the teeth become loose, and it often becomes necessary to extract them.

An oral prophylaxis as often as your dentist recommends it is one of the most important measures for preventing periodontal disease. This disease is the greatest single cause of loss of teeth after age 35. You may have heard it called pyorrhea.

There are other benefits from an oral prophylaxis. Clean teeth are important for good oral health—and they feel good too.

Having a prophylaxis periodically, so that calculus does not build up, enables you to do a more effective job of keeping your teeth clean by daily brushing after eating. Also, foreign materials in your mouth can be a cause of halitosis.

Your teeth usually are cleaned first. This helps the dentist make a more effective examination of your mouth for signs of oral disease.

Stains and deposits form on people's teeth at different rates. Therefore, some need to have their teeth cleaned more often than others. Your dentist is the best judge of how often your teeth should be cleaned. Both children and adults should have a prophylaxis at regular intervals.

Remember that having your dentist or a dental hygienist clean your teeth periodically is good insurance against disease which could result in serious damage to your teeth and your mouth.





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