

## **KNOW YOUR OQ™: YOUR HEALTHIER FUTURE STARTS WITH A HEALTHIER MOUTH**

You may know your IQ or your EQ, but do you **Know Your OQ™**? To know your OQ means you understand how oral health is linked to physical health and mental wellbeing. And that your brighter, healthier future—and your community's future— **starts** by taking care of oral health. How? By educating yourself and by embracing simple, proven preventive strategies.

Determine your OQ on a scale of 0-10 by taking Colgate's OQ assessment. Once you've taken the assessment, check out the answers below to improve your score and brush up on your oral health.

We want you to KNOW YOUR OQ™ — your oral health quotient — because our purpose is to reimagine a healthier future for all.

Your healthier future starts with oral health. KNOW YOUR OQ™ today.

### **Do You #KnowYourOQ™ ?**

*Take Colgate's assessment to find out your OQ score!  
Here's a checklist of key facts to know about oral health,  
and the links to physical health and overall wellbeing.*

- What is the most common disease in the world?
- What is the most common chronic inflammatory disease in the world?
- How does oral health affect your physical health?
- How does oral health impact your mental health?
- What are the risk factors for oral cancer?
- What is the most common cause of bad breath?
- What can you do to prevent cavities, gum disease and bad breath?
- What should you look for in an oral health product?
- Do you know the signs and symptoms of oral diseases?
- Do you know where to seek help and to determine your oral health status?

## **IMPROVE YOUR OQ**

*If you scored a 10, congratulations, you're on your way to a healthier future! Help your friends, family and community by sharing your knowledge! Invite them to determine THEIR OQ by sharing this page. You can learn even more by checking out Colgate.com, the #1 online resource for oral health.*

*If your OQ score was lower, read on to learn how to take care of your mouth... and how good oral health will lay the foundation for your overall health and wellbeing. Improve your OQ below!*

### **1. What is the most common disease in the world?**

- **Cavities:** It is estimated that [2.3 billion people worldwide](#) suffer from tooth decay in permanent teeth, and more than 530 million children suffer from cavities in primary teeth. This global public health crisis is right under our nose and it has a major impact: cavities are the source of significant physical, emotional, social, and economic consequences.
- Can adults get cavities? Yes, the highest risk populations are children and older populations with a history of cavities as a child, setting up adults for an even higher risk of getting a cavity.
- More information: [Dental Cavities: What You Should Know](#)

### **2. What is the most common chronic inflammatory disease in the world?**

- **Periodontal disease:** Periodontal diseases are prevalent both in developed and developing countries and affect about [20-50% of the global population](#). High prevalence of periodontal disease in adolescents, adults, and older individuals makes it a public health concern. It is one of the major causes of tooth loss which can compromise chewing ability, esthetics, self-confidence, and quality of life.
- Periodontal disease is driven by infection and inflammation of the gums, ligaments and bone surrounding your teeth. There is a spectrum of periodontal diseases ranging from Gingivitis -- the reversible form of the disease -- to varying degrees of periodontitis, which can lead to loss of bone and tooth support.
- More information: [The Causes of Periodontal Disease and How You Can Prevent It](#)

### **3. How does oral health affect your physical health?**

- Research shows oral health is linked to other health conditions. Oral diseases like periodontal diseases can increase the risk for heart attacks and strokes, adverse pregnancy outcomes, respiratory diseases, Alzheimer's, dementia, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes and ensuing complications like kidney disease and other complications of diabetes.
- Untreated cavities can lead to pain and swelling, making it difficult to eat nutritious foods, exercise, and lead a healthy lifestyle.
- If left untreated, infection and inflammation in the mouth can lead to other more serious illnesses.

- More information: [How Poor Dental Care Can Affect Your Overall Health](#)

#### **4. How does oral health impact your mental health?**

- Cavities are the #1 disease among children, and this has a significant impact on children's mental health, self-esteem and overall well being. In a global study, Colgate discovered oral health issues cause children to feel worried, embarrassed, sad, and anxious.
- Colgate's study also found that kids with oral health issues miss up to three days of school a year and avoid extracurricular activities, which hinder their education and social development. Put simply, a healthy mouth is essential for a child's wellbeing: you can't concentrate in school, hit developmental milestones, or even play with your friends if you have pain in your mouth.
- Research points to a strong relationship between oral health and self-esteem, as well as links between gum disease and stress, depression, distress, anxiety, and loneliness.
- More information: [Childhood Cavities, the Most Common Disease Among Children, Lead to Significant Physical, Emotional, Social and Economic Distress](#)

#### **5. What are the risk factors for oral cancer?**

- Most people with oral cancers have a history of smoking or other tobacco exposure, like chewing tobacco. The more you smoke, the greater your risk. Smoke from cigarettes, pipes, and cigars all increase your risk of getting these cancers.
- The combination of smoking and alcohol use increases the risk exponentially.
- The mortality rate for oral cancer is higher than that of cancers which we hear about routinely such as cervical cancer, Hodgkin's lymphoma, laryngeal cancer, testicular cancer, and many others.
- If oral cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, the overall 5-year survival rate for all people is 85%. About 29% of oral and oropharyngeal cancers are diagnosed at this stage. If the cancer has spread to surrounding tissues or organs and/or the regional lymph nodes, the overall 5-year survival rate is 57%.
- More information: [Oral Cancer and Esophageal Cancer](#)

#### **6. What is the most common cause of bad breath?**

- Poor oral hygiene is the most common cause of bad breath, also referred to as halitosis. When food particles are stuck between your teeth or elsewhere in your mouth, they get broken down by bacteria that grow there. That process releases a foul smell. Bacteria, which accumulate on your tongue, can be a major contributor to bad breath.
- The bacteria that cause tooth decay and gum disease can also contribute to bad breath. So it's no surprise that most cases of bad breath, or halitosis, are associated with poor oral hygiene, gum diseases such as gingivitis and periodontitis, and dry mouth, a condition in which the salivary glands cannot make enough saliva to keep your mouth moist, which also contributes to the development of cavities and periodontal diseases..
- Halitosis is the third most common reason that people seek dental care, after tooth decay and gum disease. It is estimated that 1 in 4 people have bad breath on a regular

basis. Bad breath is a common problem that can cause significant psychological distress.

- More information: [Halitosis: Causes Of Bad Breath](#)

## **6. What can you do to prevent cavities, gum disease and bad breath?**

- Brush your teeth at least twice daily for 2 minutes with a fluoride-based toothpaste to prevent cavities.
- Incorporate brushing into your bedtime routine to get rid of the germs and plaque that accumulate throughout the day. This is especially important because when we sleep at night our mouths are drier, which makes bacteria in the mouth even more harmful.
- Brush your teeth properly using circular motions to remove plaque on all tooth surfaces. You can use powered and connected technologies to help guide you for the most effective tooth brushing. Unremoved plaque can harden, leading to calculus buildup and gingivitis (early gum disease) which can progress to more advanced forms of the disease such as periodontitis, if not addressed.
- Floss your teeth at least once daily and use other interproximal cleaners to clean in between your teeth. Flossing can be difficult, especially for young children and older adults with arthritis. Rather than give up, look for tools that can help you floss your teeth such as ready-to-use dental flossers and other aids for interproximal cleaning including water flossers.
- Consider using mouth rinses as directed. Mouthwash helps in numerous ways depending on the active ingredients in the formula. It also helps us to reach hard-to-brush areas in and around the gums. In children and older people, where the ability to brush and floss may not be optimal, a mouthwash is particularly helpful. Ask your dentist for specific mouthwash recommendations. Certain brands are best for children to help to prevent cavities, and others work best on periodontal diseases. Prescription mouthwash is also available.
- Gently brush your tongue every time you brush your teeth to remove plaque or germs that accumulate on your tongue, and if necessary use tongue cleaners.
- Keep your mouth hydrated by drinking lots of water, which continues to be the best beverage for your overall health, including your oral health. Water along with saliva can help wash out some of the negative effects of sticky and acidic foods and beverages in between brushing.
- Limit your sugar intake and follow a healthy diet. Sugar is converted into acids in the mouth, which can then erode the enamel of your teeth. These acids are what lead to cavities. Fluoride in toothpastes is there to strengthen the enamel and to make it more resistant to tooth decay. Acidic fruits, carbonated beverages, teas, and coffee can also wear down tooth enamel leading to erosion. While you don't necessarily have to avoid such foods altogether, it is helpful to be mindful of intake.
- Stop smoking and using tobacco products and limit intake of alcoholic beverages in order to reduce your risk for bad breath, gum diseases and most importantly oral cancers.

- If you have diabetes, keep your diabetes under control to prevent and better manage periodontal diseases and cavities.
- If you are a teacher, caregiver, or school administrator, use resources like Colgate's [Bright Smiles, Bright Futures](#) to promote oral health education for children. Bright Smiles, Bright Futures uses a proven curriculum now offered online and in 30 languages to enable children to practice proper oral care and build healthy habits early.
- When acting as a caregiver, help younger and older individuals and those with disabilities to brush and floss their teeth if they are not able to perform these activities independently.
- Your own everyday habits are crucial to your overall oral health. Still, even the best brushers and flossers need to see a dentist regularly. At minimum, you should see your dentist/hygienist for cleanings and checkups annually, ideally twice a year. A professional will remove calculus or tartar build up that you can't remove at home, look for cavities and periodontal disease, conduct an oral cancer examination, spot potential issues early on, and offer preventive strategies and treatment solutions.
- More information: [Colgate Oral Care Center](#)

#### **8. What should you look for in an oral health product?**

- All of your oral health products should be safe and effective in helping to prevent oral diseases and maintain great oral health. Here are some specifics to pay attention to:
- In toothpastes, fluoride is one of the more important elements to look for. Fluoride remains a mainstay in oral health. This is because fluoride is a leading defense against tooth decay. It provides a protective barrier for your teeth. There are many other ingredients in toothpastes to improve whitening, to address sensitivity, and to reduce gum diseases but fluoride is currently the only active ingredient recognized by the U.S. FDA to reduce the risk of cavities.
- Mouthwashes can contain fluoride to help prevent cavities or other ingredients like Cetylpyridinium Chloride (CPC) to prevent and better manage gum diseases and bad breath and Chlorhexidine (CHX) to reduce bacteria in the mouth during rinsing.
- Find your optimal toothbrush: from manual to battery powered to rechargeable powered brushes. More recently, connected technologies empower people to get the most out of brushing by increasing the frequency and time spent brushing as well as the surfaces covered when brushing. Connected technologies can also have augmented reality games to engage young children and make brushing more fun than ever before.
- Seek out your preferred toothpaste flavor to make it more appealing and find a fun kids flavor that will have your children rushing to brush.
- More information: [Colgate Oral Care Products](#)

#### **9. Do you know the signs and symptoms of oral diseases?**

- Many common oral diseases do not have many early signs and symptoms and may have progressed substantially before becoming apparent to people who have them. Periodontal disease is often a silent disease. This is why seeing a dental professional is necessary for the most accurate assessment.

- To catch oral diseases early and to get the necessary treatment as soon as possible you should be seeing your dental health professional. If you have not seen a dentist or dental hygienist within the past year, schedule an appointment soon.
- Some dental insurance companies cover more frequent dental checkups than annual visits. If this is the case for you, take advantage of this benefit. Doing so is especially helpful if you have a history of dental issues, such as gum disease or frequent cavities. This can also be the case if you are in an at risk population like someone who has diabetes, if you're pregnant or at risk for cardiovascular diseases.
- These are the signs and symptoms to look out for:
  - **Cavities:** Toothache, spontaneous pain or pain that occurs without any apparent cause; tooth sensitivity; mild to sharp pain when eating or drinking something sweet, hot or cold; visible holes or pits in your teeth; brown, black or white staining on any surface of a tooth; pain when biting down.
  - **Periodontal diseases:** Swollen or puffy gums; bright red, dusky red or purplish gums; gums that feel tender when touched or bleed easily; pink-tinged toothbrush after brushing; spitting out blood when brushing or flossing your teeth; bad breath; pus between your teeth and gums; shifting of teeth or the development of spaces between your teeth or lose teeth.
  - **Halitosis:** A white coating on the tongue especially at the back of the tongue; dry mouth; build up of plaque around your teeth; post-nasal drip or mucous; morning bad breath and a burning tongue; thick saliva and a constant need to clear your throat; constant sour, bitter metallic taste; a bad smell in your facemask that you may be wearing for COVID mitigation.
  - **Oral cancer:** A lip or mouth sore that doesn't heal; a white or reddish patch on the inside of your mouth; loose teeth; a growth or lump inside your mouth; mouth pain; ear pain; difficult or painful swallowing.
- More information: [Oral Health, Dental Conditions & Treatments](#)

#### 10. Do you know where to seek help and to determine your oral health status?

- There are many ways to find help in your community and there are services available to all if you seek them out.
- The American Dental Association provides a list of member dentist providers at <https://findadentist.ada.org/>
- There are numerous Dental Service Organizations available throughout the US to provide dental services.
- Federally Qualified Health Centers within your community may provide dental services and accept Medicaid.
- Dental Schools often provide tiered services to the community at different costs depending on the service provider including well supervised students and residents as well as faculty who may practice within the dental school.
- More information: Start a live conversation with Colgate to get answers to your dental health questions at [Colgate.com](https://www.colgate.com).

*Oral health is the gateway to overall health and wellbeing, community health, and a healthier future for all. Share this important public health message with your community in order to reimagine a healthier future for all: KNOW YOUR OQ.*

*For more information about how to take care of your oral health, visit [Colgate.com](https://www.colgate.com), the #1 online resource for oral health information.*