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GREAT EIGHT

EXPERT TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER MOUTH

SHAPE SHIFT

CAN YOU CHANGE THE SHAPE OF YOUR TEETH?

MOUTHS OF BABES

WHAT'S THE RIGHT AGE FOR A FIRST DENTAL VISIT?

BALANCED BEAM

Actor **Anna Kendrick** opens up about finding success



Reviewed by
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The Great Eight

Keep your mouth in tiptop shape with our expert tips

By Heather Hatfield, WebMD Contributing Writer

Brushing, flossing, and rinsing are the ABCs of oral health, but they're only the beginning. A marvelous mouth takes more than squeezing paste out of a tube—think improving your toothbrushing technique, ditching the daily soda habit, and saying goodbye to cigarettes.

David Leader, DMD, an assistant clinical professor at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in Boston, outlines eight oral care musts for a healthy mouth.

1 Pay a visit. If you're prone to ditching the dentist, you're among the roughly 50% of adults in the United States who don't see a dentist yearly because of dental phobia, finances, or just plain neglect. But spend some quality time with your dentist (twice a year, the American Dental Association advises), and you'll catch problems such as decay, gum disease, trauma, or cancer at an early stage when they're treatable, not to mention more affordable to take care of.

2 Count the years. Toddlers and older adults tend to fly under the dental health radar, but they need mouth maintenance just like the rest of us. Children should see a dentist by the time they're 1, and until they are coordinated



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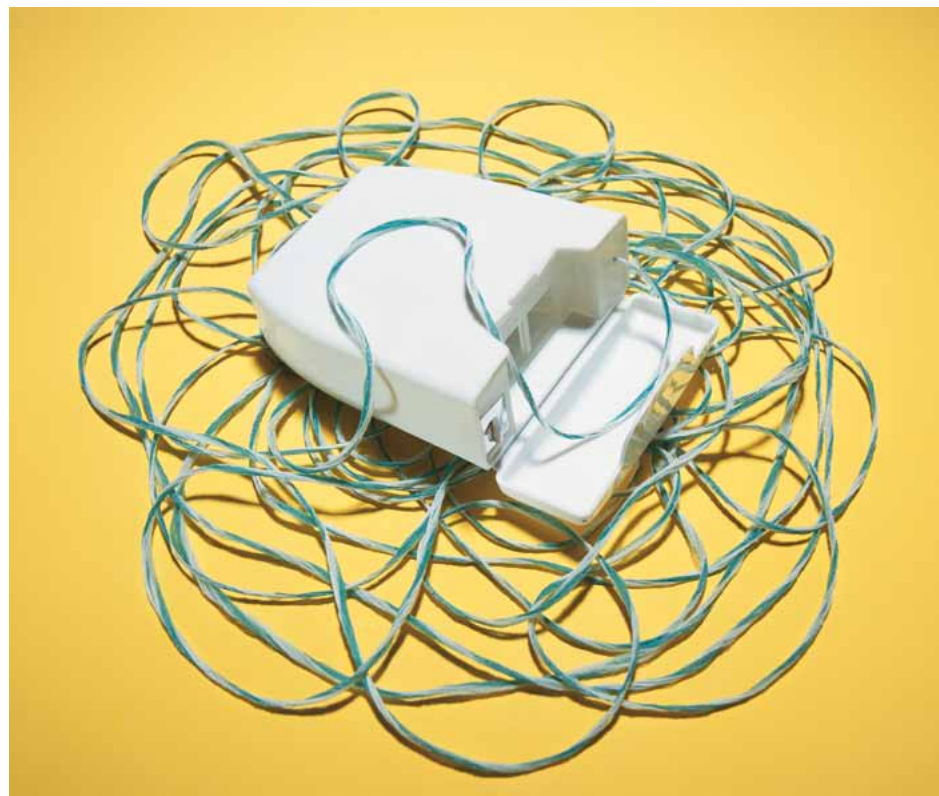


enough to tie their own shoes, they'll need help cleaning their teeth. Older folks have their own oral issues. Arthritis can make brushing and flossing challenging, and as people age, the amount of saliva they produce decreases, which means more tooth decay and also discomfort for those who wear dentures.

3 Can the soda. Fizzy is fun but also part of the reason soda is so bad for your teeth. Two ingredients—phosphoric acid and citric acid—give soda its “bite” but also eat away at the surface of your teeth. While the occasional soda won't hurt, a can or more a day makes your tooth enamel softer and more susceptible to cavities. Switch to water instead, adding flavor with sliced citrus or crushed berries or mint leaves.

4 Don't sugarcoat it. Sugar is a major culprit in tooth decay. It fuels bacteria and acidity in your mouth, causing plaque to form and eat away at your enamel and gums. Your pearly whites are hit with up to 20 minutes of acid production for every sugar fest you indulge in, from sweetened coffee in the morning to ice cream at night. To avoid being among the 20% of people in the United States who face tooth decay every time they look in the mirror, try to cut down on sugary treats, and aim to brush and floss after every meal or snack.

5 Pack it in. You've heard it before: Quit smoking. But this time, it's your dentist talking. The nicotine and tar in cigarettes not only turn your



Avoid being among the 20% of people who face tooth decay: Cut down on sugary treats, and aim to brush and floss after every meal.

teeth an unsightly shade of yellow, they eat away at your gums. Smoking creates a ripe environment for bacteria and plaque on your teeth and along the gum line. That harms tissue, degrades the bone that supports teeth, and, eventually, increases your risk of tooth loss. Even worse, tobacco chemicals can lead to oral cancer.

6 Use the right toothbrush. You want a brush with soft bristles. With the right technique, it should last two to three months. It's ready to be replaced when you notice bent bristles, but don't wait that long. Even a straight bristle tip can become blunted instead of rounded and cause injury to the teeth and gums.

7 Practice proper technique. While you probably know you should brush your teeth at least twice a day,

if you're like most people, you don't give much thought to how to do it. Hold the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle, pointed toward the gum line, and use gentle, short, circular motions. Brush each tooth 10 to 15 times, but don't overdo it. Overly aggressive brushing can damage teeth and erode your gum line.

8 Finesse flossing. It's simple: Flossing fosters healthier teeth and gums. But like brushing, there's a right and wrong way because flaws in your flossing can cause friction and damage the gum line. Wrap about a foot of floss around your index fingers, keeping about two inches between your fingers to work with. Unroll a fresh section of floss for each tooth, and keep the floss tight against the tooth to break up plaque while leaving your gums in good shape. ●

NICHOLAS EVELEIGH/GETTY IMAGES

Tiny Teeth

What's the right age for a visit to the dentist?

Q ▶ How old should my child be before I make his first dental appointment?

A ▶ You should take him in by the time he celebrates his first birthday.

First visits are mostly about getting kids used to the dentist's chair and educating parents about how to care for baby's teeth. If your child has transitioned from the bottle to cup and doesn't snack or drink in

the middle of the night, you get a one-year pass, until age 2. That's when the standard every-six-month dental visit recommendation kicks into gear.



When your child is between ages 4 and 6, expect your dentist to take a first set of X-rays to check for cavities lurking between the teeth.

Prevention is the name of the game between ages 6 and 12, when baby teeth give way to permanent teeth. Your child's dentist will probably suggest a sealant, a plastic resin that bonds to teeth's chewing surfaces, between ages 7 and 9. Cavity-prone molars are the most likely site for treatment. The resin keeps cavity-causing bacteria from getting into the grooves and valleys of teeth.

Also when your child is around age 7, his dentist will likely suggest an orthodontic evaluation. Most kids will wait until their early teens for braces, but orthodontics is about modifying jaw growth, so identifying skeletal causes of crooked teeth early helps ensure a beautiful smile later on.

In the end, it's the basics—brushing twice a day, flossing daily, and getting regular dental checkups—that have the most impact on a kid's smile.



Can I change the shape of my teeth?

Yes. You can choose from among several dental procedures.

Dental bonding is a procedure in which your dentist applies a tooth-colored resin to the tooth surface, which hardens with a special light that bonds the material to the tooth. Bonding can fill gaps between teeth, repair small chips, and smooth out rough edges.

Dental crowns are tooth-shaped “caps” placed over teeth. Cemented into place, crowns encase the entire visible portion of a tooth. Crowns are made of porcelain or porcelain fused to metal and restore the tooth's natural shape, contour, and appearance.

Veneers are wafer-thin, custom-made shells of tooth-colored materials, either porcelain or resin that are bonded to the front surface of teeth.

Recontouring or reshaping removes small amounts of tooth enamel to change a tooth's length, shape, or surface.

These options differ in terms of cost, durability, and “chair time.” Talk to your dentist to see what's right for you.

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BALANCED

Actor **Anna Kendrick** used to have a hard time smiling, but now she finds it hard not to

BEAM

By Lauren Paige Kennedy, WebMD Contributing Writer

Anna Kendrick is quick to grin—in fact, her winsome smile just might be her signature feature. Yet just a few years ago, when she first became a household name after a knockout, Academy Award-nominated performance in *Up in the Air* opposite George Clooney, her beam was a bit of an act.

“I try so hard to keep smiling, and to deal with everything publicly,” she told talk show host Ellen DeGeneres in early 2010, right as her career was hitting hyper-drive. “But my poor friends and family are dealing with my meltdowns on a daily basis.” Kendrick says she felt overwhelmed by the media attention and the transition from life as a working actor who’d labored for years on Broadway and in smaller parts to bona fide celebrity.

“It feels funny to complain about that end of it,” she says now. “So I won’t do that. But it does put you in a very vulnerable place.”

Two years later, after critical praise for her work in Seth Rogen’s 2011 cancer dramedy *50/50* and with the much-buzzed-about *What to Expect When You’re Expecting* due for delivery in May, Kendrick says her inner and outer selves have finally aligned. But that’s not because the media juggernaut has become any easier.

“I enjoy being on set—much more than getting caught up in the promotional end,”

she says. “I am a lot more comfortable in my skin now, mostly because I did six films last year, and I spent more of my time doing the actual work, which is what I really enjoy.”

Kendrick, 26, always wanted to be an actor, even as a preteen growing up in Portland, Maine. Her parents helped make that happen, packing Kendrick and her older brother onto a Greyhound bus to New York City so they could audition for—and win—coveted roles. (Her first acting gig was at 12, playing Dinah in the Broadway musical *High Society*.) “We had to promise up and down we’d go straight to the audition” and then turn around and come straight home, she laughs.

She’s doing less auditioning nowadays as acting roles continue to roll in. In *What to Expect*—a film co-starring Jennifer Lopez, Cameron Diaz, Elizabeth Banks, and Chris Rock—Kendrick plays a gourmet food truck vendor who hooks up with a fellow rising chef, played by *Gossip Girl*’s Chace Crawford.

After the “meet cute,” the fledgling duo find themselves, to their great shock, pregnant.

How did Kendrick prepare? “I did some research with a chef,” she says, “and cut my fingers so many times in the process! But I felt weird about going up to random women and asking if they’d ever had an unexpected pregnancy, and what that felt like. For part of the shoot I did wear a pregnancy prosthetic, and I was most surprised about how many people came up and just started poking at my stomach. They’d just poke it! And so many women on the set would see me [wearing] it and immediately start telling me about their own experiences being pregnant. There was something about the stomach itself that made women want to talk.”

Kendrick says she’s “nowhere close to being enough of a grown-up” to consider motherhood, although she’s not ruling it out down the line. She’s glad she’s been able to first pursue her dream. In fact, Kendrick’s mother paved the way by setting a good example.


“I grew up with a working mom,” Kendrick says. “So that was always normal to me. But I remember one time a neighbor who was a stay-at-home mom came over and criticized my mother for making one big batch of pancakes and then freezing what was left so we could take them out and eat them all week. And my dad overheard her, and he just let her have it! Why do moms do that to each other? Because you know what? We loved those pancakes! We did.” ■

ART: STREIBER/AUGUST



3 THINGS THAT MAKE ANNA SMILE

- 1 “Seeing people’s home renovations in *Dwell* magazine. What they’ve done to their homes, I always think it’s so sweet—and cooler than anything I can manage.”
- 2 “Dog-sitting! I don’t have one yet, so I will dog-sit for basically anybody.”
- 3 “My mom makes jewelry, and sometimes she sends me something in the mail out of nowhere.”

What makes you smile? Share it in our [communities](#).  [WebMD.com](#)