

Bite Into Better Oral Health

It's not just about teeth—it's about total health



What's inside

The mouth-body connection

See the many ways oral health impacts you.

Fast facts on oral health

Insights that show why you should invest in your oral health.

A look behind your smile

Explore the complexities in your mouth that defend and protect you.

Prevention is power

Easy daily practices that make a big difference in protecting your teeth and gums.

Oral health assessment

Find out your oral health score. Where do you stand?

How dental insurance helps you stay ahead

See why having coverage isn't just smart, it's a key part of staying healthy and saving money along the way.

Smile Brighter, Live Lighter

Spirit Dental & vision makes it easy to get the care you need with straightforward, no hassle coverage.

Intro

Your mouth does more than help you speak, eat and smile—it's the gateway to your entire body's health.

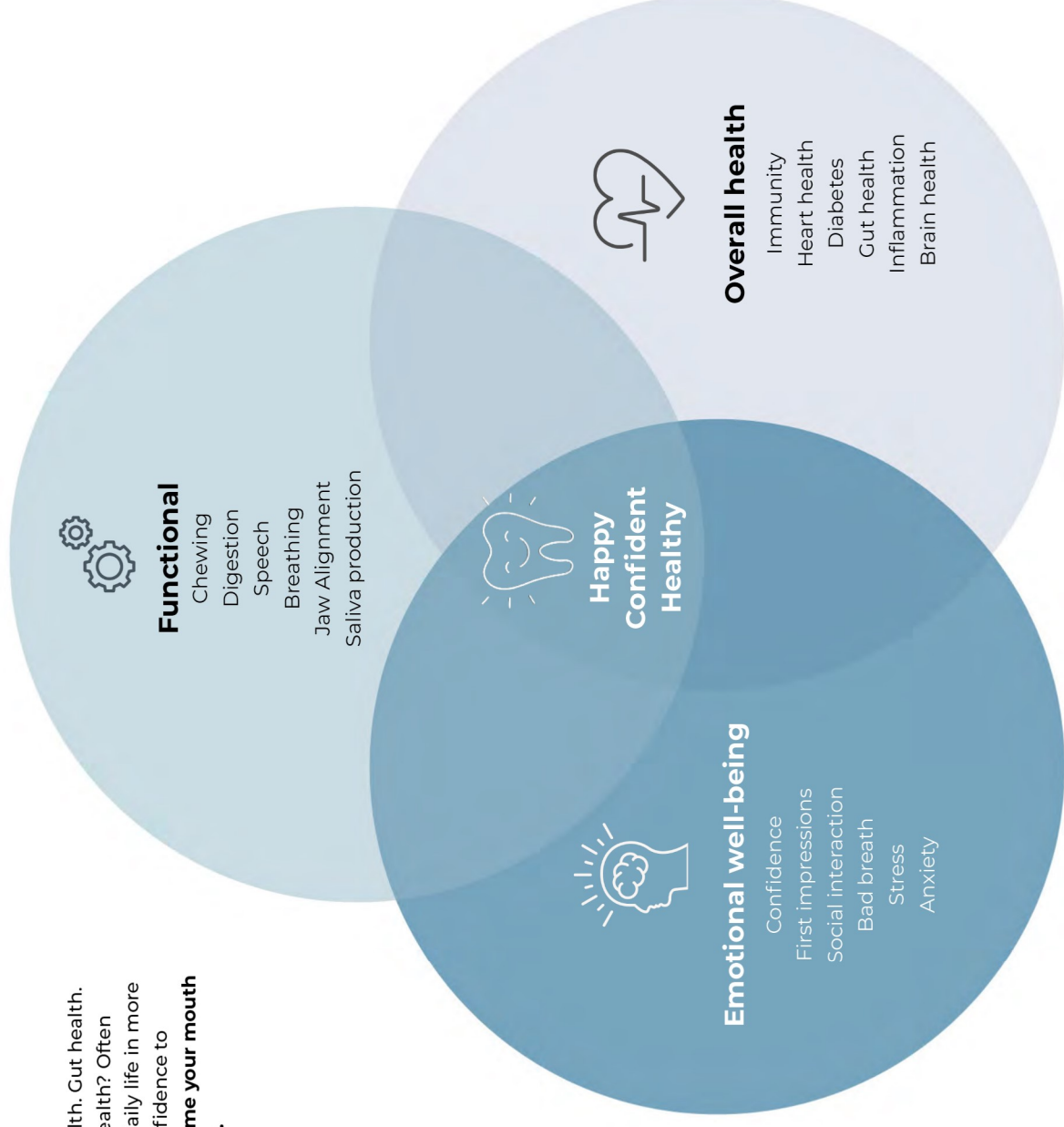
In this guide, we'll explore how caring for your smile supports total wellness, why prevention is your most powerful tool and how Spirit Dental provides coverage to help you achieve your oral health goals.

From quick facts and expert tips to understanding the hidden connections between oral and overall health, this guide gives you everything you need to take control of your well-being—starting with your smile.

Ready to unlock the power of a healthier you? Let's dive in!

The mouth-body connection

Why invest in oral health? Heart health. Gut health. Overall health. But what about oral health? Often overlooked, oral health powers your daily life in more ways than you might think. From confidence to digestion to disease prevention, **it's time your mouth gets the credit, and love, it deserves.**



Fast facts | Oral health

Whether you're already prioritizing your dental health or just starting to learn, these stats may surprise you—and **inspire you to take action.**

\$1

spent on preventive dental care can save \$8-\$50 in restorative treatment

#1

chronic disease in children is tooth decay

96%

of adults aged 65+ have had a cavity

21%

of adults aged 20-64 have untreated dental cavities

15 systemic diseases

connected to oral health

1. Cardiovascular Disease
2. Alzheimer's Disease
3. Periodontal Disease
4. Diabetes
5. High-Risk Pregnancy
6. Cancer
7. Obstructive Sleep Apnea
8. Obesity
9. Respiratory Issues
10. Rheumatoid Arthritis
11. Osteoporosis
12. Kidney Disease
13. Prostate/Erectile Dysfunction
14. COVID-19
15. Infertility



1 in 10
of adults aged 65-74
have lost all their
teeth



1/2
of American adults
over age 30 have
periodontal (gum)
disease



35%

of young adults
have difficulty
biting and chewing.



22%

of young adults avoid
social activities due to
the condition of their
mouth and teeth.

25%

of adults hold back
from smiling because
of the condition of their
mouth and teeth.

A look behind your smile

Teeth, gums, nerves and more, your mouth is a complex system with powerful connections to the rest of your body.

From the moment you wake up, your mouth is hard at work helping you eat, speak, smile, breathe and even fight off viruses—all without breaking a sweat.

But when something feels off—like tooth sensitivity, swollen gum or jaw pain—it's your mouth's way of saying, "Help!"

The good news? **Your dentist can spot issues early and guide you back to full health.**

Part of the mouth	What it does	Why it matters
 Teeth	Chews food, supports speech & jaw structure	Protects nerves and blood vessels—decay or infection can spread leading to a range of health issues
 Gums	Holds and protects the base of teeth	Inflammation here can lead to gum disease and allow bacteria into the bloodstream
 Jaw	Anchors teeth, enables chewing, speaking and proper bite alignment	Stress and imbalance can cause TMJ issues, headaches and teeth grinding
 Saliva	Neutralizes acid, aids digestion, washes away food and bacteria	Prevents cavities, aids in digestion and remineralization and supports a healthy oral microbiome
 Tongue	Assists with taste, swallowing, speech and cleaning the mouth	Can show signs of vitamin deficiencies or oral infections—key indicator of oral and overall health
 Oral Bacteria	Hundreds of species live in the mouth—some protect, others harm	Imbalance can lead to decay, gum disease and systemic inflammation

Welcome to the tiny world living in your mouth

Inside your mouth lives a complex community of over 700 species of bacteria—**your oral microbiome**. Some of these microscopic residents are your body's natural defenders, helping you fight off infections, digest food and keep your gums and teeth strong. Others? Not so friendly. **Left unchecked, harmful bacteria can multiply fast, triggering inflammation, gum disease, and even spreading to your heart, brain and beyond.**

Good bacteria



- ✓ Neutralizes acids
- ✓ Fights infection
- ✓ Supports immune response
- ✓ Reduces inflammation
- ✓ Helps maintain a healthy oral microbiome
- ✓ Protects against cavities and gum disease

Bad bacteria



- ✗ Produces acid from sugar
- ✗ Causes plaque buildup
- ✗ Triggers gum inflammation and infection
- ✗ Leads to tooth decay and cavities
- ✗ Causes gum disease (gingivitis, periodontitis)
- ✗ Can enter the bloodstream and contribute to chronic illness

Keeping your oral microbiome in balance is a vital part of keeping you feeling your best.

How cavities happen

Every time you eat or drink, bacteria in your mouth interact with sugars to create acid. This acid slowly wears away your enamel, leading to tooth decay.



Sugar feed bacteria, bacteria produce acid, acid weakens teeth—leading to cavities over time.



Prevention is power

When it comes to your oral health, **prevention is your greatest strength.**

It's not just about avoiding cavities or keeping your smile bright, **it's about stopping small issues before they become major (and costly) problems.** Regular brushing and flossing might feel like simple tasks, but they're frontline defenses against harmful bacteria, inflammation and disease.

And it doesn't take perfection. Just a few consistent habits—plus regular dental visits—can make all the difference.

Small habits. Big impact.

- ✓ Brush twice a day
- ✓ Floss daily
- ✓ Drink water regularly
- ✓ Limit sugar and acidic foods
- ✓ Chew sugar-free gum after meals
- ✓ Avoid tobacco products
- ✓ Manage stress & sleep
- ✓ Keep regular dental checkups

The best and worst foods for a healthy smile

What you eat feeds your mouth. These foods protect your teeth and these others, not so much.

Avoid these (Harmful to oral health)

	Sugary - Candy
	Acidity - Coffee
	Starchy - Bread
	Carbonated - Soda
	Staining - Red wine
	Sticky - Dried fruit

Choose these (Supports oral health)

	Calcium - Dairy
	Phosphorous - Lean proteins
	Vitamin D - Fatty fish
	Vitamin C - Citrus fruits
	Fiber - Whole grains
	Fluoride - Water

At-home dental care vs professional dental care

Brushing and flossing are essential, but they can only go so far. Your dentist can reach deeper, see more and stop problems before you ever feel them. From detecting early signs of disease to performing thorough cleanings and precise treatments, dentists do what your toothbrush can't. **Real prevention means having a pro on your side.**



AT-HOME DENTAL CARE	WHAT THE DENTIST DOES (BETTER)
Brush your teeth twice a day to remove plaque	Removes hardened tartar that your toothbrush can't reach or remove
Floss daily to clean between teeth	Deep cleans below the gumline to prevent further deterioration
Look for visible issues, like bleeding or ulcers	Detects hidden problems using x-rays, and clinical expertise
Manage stress to reduce clenching or grinding	Identifies worn down teeth and recommends night guards
Seek general tips from trusted resources	Provides personalized advice based on your age and history
Try to maintain a clean mouth & stay healthy	Checks for signs of infection or other hidden issues, like cancer

Your oral health power bar

Think of your smile like a health meter. Every good habit boosts your power—how full is your bar?



Oral health assessment

How healthy is your smile?

1. How often do you brush your teeth?

- Twice a day or more **(2 points)**
- Once a day **(1 point)**
- A few times a week or less **(0 points)**

2. Do you floss regularly?

- Every day **(2 points)**
- A few times a week **(1 point)**
- Rarely or never **(0 points)**

3. How often do you see a dentist for cleanings and checkups?

- Every 6 months **(2 points)**
- Once a year **(1 point)**
- It's been a while... **(0 points)**

4. Do your gums ever bleed when brushing or flossing?

- No, never **(2 points)**
 - Occasionally **(1 point)**
- 5. Do you experience tooth sensitivity or pain?**
- No, my teeth feel great **(2 points)**
 - Occasionally **(1 point)**

- Yes, it's an ongoing issue **(0 points)**

6. How often do you drink sugary beverages (soda, juice, sweetened coffee)?

- Rarely or never **(2 points)**
- A few times a week **(1 point)**
- Daily or more **(0 points)**

7. Do you smoke or use tobacco products?

- No **(2 points)**
- Occasionally **(1 point)**
- Yes **(0 points)**

Your smile score

Add up your points and see where your oral health habits stand:

Score

12-14 points
You've got great habits in place and your mouth is likely in excellent shape. Keep it up!

8-11 points
You're on the right track, but a few tweaks could make a big difference.

0-7 points
Don't worry, it's never too late. Improving just a few habits can lead to a healthier smile.

How dental insurance helps you stay ahead

Dental insurance isn't just for emergencies or big treatments. It's your tool for staying ahead, helping you prevent problems before they start. **With a dental plan, you're more likely to keep up with checkups, cleanings and the care that keeps your mouth (and body) healthy.**

Think of it like this

Dental insurance is like car insurance—but better. While car insurance won't pay for oil changes to keep your car running smoothly, **dental insurance covers the regular maintenance your smile needs.** With 100% coverage for cleanings and checkups, you can keep your teeth healthy, catch small issues early and avoid costly repairs later—just like regular oil changes help prevent breakdowns on the road.

Dental insurance is *definitely* worth it

Oral & overall health

- Encourages routine care and cleanings
- Helps to prevent infections, pain and chronic inflammation
- Supports early detection of serious conditions

Financial health

- Helps cover costly dental work treatments
- Preventive care often 100% covered
- Helps avoid surprise bills or delaying care due to cost

Peace of mind

- You're covered if an emergency strikes
- You can get care right away with trusted providers
- Gives you long-term protection and support you can count on

Mental well-being

- Helps you take control of your health
- Reduces stress about dental costs
- Boosts confidence through regular care and a healthy smile



Spirit Dental & Vision: Smile Brighter, Live Lighter

At Spirit Dental, we believe dental insurance should be simple, straightforward and work for you. **That means accessing affordable dental care easily without hassle.**

Your dental plan should help you stay healthy, not hold you back. That's why **our plans come with no waiting periods, high annual maximums and immediate coverage** for preventive, basic and major services—including implants and child orthodontics.

We're here to support your overall wellness by making it easy to care for your smile.

Ready to shop plans? Explore your options and find the coverage that fits with you. [Shop plans at SpiritDental.com](https://www.spiritdental.com).



Have
questions?

We'll help you find the right plan for your needs and budget.

Whether you're new to dental insurance or looking for better coverage, our friendly and knowledgeable dental coverage experts are here to assist you every step of the way.

Connect with us via live chat on [SpiritDental.com](https://www.spiritdental.com) or call us: 844-833-8440.

Where you go from here

You now have a clearer picture of how your mouth and body work together. Understanding your oral health is a true foundation for caring for your whole self.

Wrapping it up, you learned:

- Your mouth is a gateway to your overall health
- Prevention is your strongest defense
- Your daily habits matter more than perfection
- A healthy mouth supports better energy, confidence and long-term well-being
- Dental insurance makes it easier—and more affordable—to stay ahead

You don't need perfection to have a healthy mouth, just progress. What's one little step you can take today to improve your oral health?

Keep moving forward, keep learning and know that **Spirit Dental is here to support you, and your smile, every step of the way.**





About: Spirit Dental & Vision provides straightforward benefits for individuals, families and small businesses. No waiting periods, high annual maximums and a lifetime deductible are just a few of the ways we do things differently. Good oral health is essential for total health and preventing costly issues. That's why our plans make it easier and more affordable for you to get the care you need, when you need it.

Shop for your plan today at spiritdental.com.

Smile brighter, live lighter with Spirit Dental & Vision.

Spirit Dental & Vision is marketed by Direct Benefits, an Alera Group Company and based in Bloomington, MN. At Direct Benefits, we specialize in proprietary dental and vision products, including Magnum Dental, Denali Dental & Vision, Direct Vision and Triumph Dental & Vision. We also offer insurance from top brands for pet, travel, short-term medical, life insurance & more at directbenefits.com.

Ameritas Life Insurance Corp. is the insurance carrier that underwrites Spirit Dental & Vision.

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