For most of us, thorough daily oral hygiene lays the groundwork for a healthy smile. Just a simple routine of **brushing** and **flossing**, in addition to regular **dental checkups**, can be enough in most cases to help prevent tooth decay, gum disease and bad breath.

**Brushing up on technique**

Since there are various techniques for brushing your teeth, it’s a good idea to ask your dentist which one to use. Here are a few tips to help you develop a good brushing routine:

- **Brush twice a day**  
  Brush your teeth in the morning and before bed
- **Use a toothpaste with fluoride** to help prevent tooth decay
- **Brushing gums**  
  Hold your toothbrush at a slight angle toward the gums when brushing along the gum line.
- **Concentrate on brushing all surfaces**  
  Use a gentle touch—it doesn’t take much pressure to remove the plaque from your teeth, and a vigorous scrubbing could irritate your gums
- **Brushing your tongue**  
  Brushing your tongue gently can help remove bacteria that cause bad breath

**The importance of flossing**

Cleaning between your teeth is every bit as important as brushing. Since brushing can not effectively clean between teeth, it’s important to use floss to get to those areas.

- Other items also are available to help you clean between your teeth. Ask your dentist which ones to use
- As with brushing, use a gentle touch to avoid injuring your gum tissue
- Clean between your teeth once a day