

# Frequently Asked Questions

DR. MICHAEL DiPAULA

## DENTIST QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

**Q: How often should I replace my toothbrush?**

**A:** Dr. DiPaula suggests that you replace your toothbrush every two to three months, or sooner if the bristles become frayed. A worn toothbrush will not do a good job of cleaning your teeth.

**Q: What are some tips for good oral hygiene?**

**A:** There are lots of ways to ensure your teeth are as healthy as they can be; here are just a few:

1. Brush your teeth after all meals with ADA-accepted fluoride toothpaste.
2. Clean between teeth daily with floss or an interdental cleaner. Decay-causing bacteria still linger between teeth where toothbrush bristles can't reach. Flossing removes plaque and food particles from between the teeth and under the gum line.
3. Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks.
4. Visit Dr. DiPaula regularly for professional cleanings and oral exams.

**Q: What is plaque?**

**A:** Sugared foods such as soda, candy and cookies are not the only culprits. Starches such as bread, crackers and cereal also cause acids to form. If you snack often, you could be having acid attacks all day long. After many acid attacks, your teeth may decay. Plaque also produces substances that irritate the gums, making them red, tender, or apt to bleed easily. After a while, gums may pull away from the teeth. Pockets form and fill with more bacteria and pus. If the gums are not treated, the bone around the teeth can be destroyed. The teeth may become loose or have to be removed. In fact, periodontal (gum) disease is a main cause of tooth loss in adults. One way to prevent tooth decay and periodontal (gum) disease is by eating a balanced diet and limiting the number of between-meal snacks. If you need a snack, choose nutritious foods such as raw vegetables, plain yogurt, cheese, or a piece of fruit.

**Q: Why are soda drinks so bad?**

**A:** Besides the obvious health concerns of obesity and diuretic water loss, soda demineralizes the teeth rapidly and accelerates cavity formation. Soda is primarily acid water (phosphoric and other acids). Diet soda is more acidic than most sugar sodas. Thus, diet soda is more destructive to the teeth. Never drink straight out of the can or bottle. If you have to drink soda, dilute it with ice. Better to drink water!

**Q: Should I brush or floss first?**

**A:** The sequence makes no difference as long as you do a thorough job.

**Q: How do I floss my teeth?**

**A:** Flossing your teeth is simple, just follow these steps:

1. Break off about 18 inches of floss and wind most of it around one of your middle fingers. Wind the remaining floss around the same finger of the opposite hand. This finger will take up the floss as it becomes dirty. Hold the floss tightly between your thumbs and forefingers.
2. Guide the floss between your teeth using a gentle rubbing motion. Never snap the floss into the gums.
3. When the floss reaches the gum line, curve it into a C shape against one tooth. Gently slide it into the space between the gum and the tooth.
4. Hold the floss tightly against the tooth. Gently rub the side of the tooth, moving the floss away from the gum with up and down motions.
5. Repeat this method on the rest of your teeth.
6. Don't forget the back side of your last tooth.

**Q: Do nutritional supplements affect periodontal disease?**

**A:** Yes. Many patients experiencing bleeding gums can be related to low antioxidant levels in the body. This is why a balanced diet with many fresh fruits and vegetables is so important to all health, including dental health. This is why we use an antioxidant laser scanner in our office if we suspect any nutritional deficiency involvement in the periodontal status. Dr. DiPaula has a holistic approach to the entire health of the body and taught a course for the Maryland State Dental Association, "The Antioxidant Connection and Periodontal Disease." Ask Dr. DiPaula any questions on nutrition, water health, and natural energy healing... he has a passion for health and wellness, and enjoys sharing what he has learned.

**Q: What is PowerLase?**

**A:** Using safe laser technology, PowerLase treats both teeth and gums with minimum invasive dentistry, which means greater comfort for you! Because the PowerLase offers pinpoint accuracy, in most cases the laser allows for cavity treatment without anesthetic injections or numbness. Dr. DiPaula uses PowerLase to treat gum disease right in the office, allowing the gums to heal naturally around teeth that have periodontal pockets – with "no incisions or stitches."

**Q: What are Lumineers?**

**A:** If you've lived for years with stained, crooked or chipped teeth, you can change your smile with Lumineers! Lumineers are the painless way to reshape and permanently whiten your smile. Dr. DiPaula applies these contact lens-thin porcelain veneers to save your tooth structure, while giving you the perfect smile you've always wanted! With

## Frequently Asked Questions continued

---

Lumineers, in most cases there's no reduction of sensitive tooth structure, no shots, and it's typically done in just two easy dental visits. Plus, it's completely reversible, since your natural tooth structure is still intact. Schedule an appointment with Dr. DiPaula today for a Free Smile Analysis. You'll see "before and after" pictures to see just how great your smile can be!

**Q: *What are Mini Dental Implants (MDI)?***

**A:** Visit Dr. DiPaula in the morning, have Mini Dental Implants placed in about an hour, then leave the dental office with stable, secure dentures attached to your Mini Dental Implants. Imagine eating, speaking and smiling with confidence. Your denture feels secure and is being held firmly in place thanks to Mini Dental Implants. Mini Dental Implants are used to replace missing teeth or secure loose dentures. Mini Dental Implants can be an alternative to the more expensive root form implants in many cases. Call us to find out the difference.

**Q: *Am I a candidate for implants?***

**A:** Implant patients are of all ages and implants may be the right choice for anyone missing one or more teeth due to injury, disease, or decay. They are especially practical for patients who can no longer wear removable dentures. Dr. DiPaula, as an implant dentist, can determine if you are a candidate for dental implants and what type of implant is best for you after a careful evaluation of your dental and medical history.

**Q: *What is gum disease?***

**A:** In the broadest sense, the term gum disease – or periodontal disease – describes bacterial growth and production of factors that gradually destroy the tissue surrounding and supporting the teeth. "Periodontal" means "around the tooth." Gum disease begins with plaque, which is always forming on your teeth, without you even knowing it. When it accumulates to excessive levels, it can harden into a substance called tartar (calculus) in as little as 24 hours. Tartar is so tightly bound to teeth that it can be removed only during a professional cleaning. Gingivitis and periodontitis are the two main stages of gum disease. Each stage is characterized by what a dentist sees and feels in your mouth, and by what's happening under your gum line. Although gingivitis usually precedes periodontitis, it's important to know that not all gingivitis progresses to periodontitis. Dr. DiPaula uses the latest laser techniques to correct periodontal disease destruction, avoiding the more expensive and aggressive periodontal surgical techniques that usually involve "cutting and stitches." Laser gum treatments, besides being more affordable, are less invasive and usually heal faster with much less discomfort. Call us if you have tender or bleeding gums. This can be a more serious problem than you think. The earlier it is addressed, the better the results.

**Q: *What causes a toothache?***

**A:** Dr. DiPaula suggests several possible causes of a toothache that include:

1. Dental decay.
2. A fracture of the tooth.
3. A cracked tooth. This may be invisible and so can be difficult to diagnose.
4. Irritation of the pulp following dental treatment. Regardless of how well it is done, dental treatment and the materials used to fill the tooth can sometimes cause pain later.
5. An exposed tooth root, which can occur if the gums recede or are damaged by over-vigorous brushing.
6. A tooth slightly out of alignment (hyper-occlusion) can be the culprit.

**Q: *What are some of the benefits of cosmetic dentistry?***

**A:** A great smile should improve your self-confidence, which can have a positive impact on the social and professional aspects of your life. Cosmetic dentistry is not just about pretty smiles though. New techniques and materials are available for back teeth as well as the ones you see when you smile. Now your mouth can look great, get healthy, and function better at the same time. A beautiful, bright smile can be life changing. We offer free cosmetic consultations for anyone that wants to see their true smile potential.

**Q: *How long does teeth whitening last?***

**A:** Teeth whitening, although not a permanent procedure, can be maintained easily using easy follow-up touch-up procedures. Results can be maintained for many years, depending upon your personal habits and maintenance program. In most cases, the whitening procedure is very effective and Dr. DiPaula's patients are pleased with the results.

**Q: *What causes discoloration of the teeth?***

**A:** Teeth enamel discoloration can be caused by staining, aging, or chemical damage to teeth. Some of the more common causes of teeth discoloration are medications, coffee, tea, or cigarettes. People who drink significant amounts of cola soft drinks can experience similar staining. Aside from staining, there are other factors that can affect the color of an individual's teeth. Genetics can play a role. Some people have naturally brighter enamel than others. Disease can also be a factor and certain medications can cause a discoloration of the teeth. Zoom or Tray Whitening procedures can dramatically improve your smile and have life-changing results at a modest investment cost.

**Q: *What can be done for missing teeth?***

**A:** Bridges are designed to replace missing teeth. Not only do they fill the unsightly spaces left by lost teeth, but they also help support the teeth adjacent to, and directly opposite, the missing teeth. Implants are artificial roots placed to support individual teeth without involving adjacent teeth.

## Frequently Asked Questions continued

---

**Q: *There's a big gap between my two front teeth. Can that be changed?***

**A:** Yes. Bonded veneers can close gaps and help create the smile you desire. Bonded resins generally require one office visit, while porcelain veneering takes two. Bonded veneers, along with good oral hygiene and a healthy lifestyle, are effective ways to enhance a smile. Dr. DiPaula, as an experienced cosmetic dentist, can explain the various techniques and help determine which is the best suited to your specific needs. Dr. DiPaula is a certified Lumineer Smile Design Dentist. Come in and see actual before and after results.

**Q: *What are dental veneers?***

**A:** Veneers are thin slices of porcelain. These are precisely made to fit over the visible surface of front teeth and are an ideal way of treating discolored or unsightly teeth, closing gaps between front teeth, or repairing chips and cracks. The office of Dr. DiPaula uses minimum prep procedures. In most cases, no sensitive tooth structure is involved, therefore no needles or anesthesia is needed. We provide free cosmetic analysis.

**Q: *Can I have white fillings?***

**A:** For over 150 years standard fillings have been made out of a silvery-grey material called "amalgam." This is still one of the strongest and longest-lasting materials available for fillings. However, many people find it unattractive and some are concerned about possible health risks. White fillings are now becoming a popular alternative to amalgam fillings. The new dental materials mean it is much easier to find a perfect match for the shade of a particular tooth. In most cases, it is quite impossible to see that the tooth even has a filling.

**Q: *Will wearing the Invisalign aligners affect my speech?***

**A:** Like all orthodontic treatments, aligners may temporarily affect your speech, and you may have a slight lisp for a while. However, you will get used to the aligners and the impediment should go away.

**Q: *Will the treatment be painful?***

**A:** Most people experience tooth soreness for a few days after starting each new stage. This is normal. It is a sign that the aligners are working.

**Q: *Will other people easily notice when I am wearing Invisalign aligners?***

**A:** The Invisalign clear aligners are virtually undetectable to others.

**Q: *Can I wear the aligners while eating?***

**A:** The aligners are removable for eating, brushing, and flossing. No need to miss out on your favorite foods.

**Q: *Will Invisalign be comfortable to wear?***

**A:** The Invisalign aligners are comfortable to wear, since there are no brackets, wires, or permanent fixtures.

**Q: *When should I begin cleaning my child's teeth?***

**A:** Once your child's teeth begin erupting, you can begin cleaning them by wiping them with a moist washcloth. As your child gets more teeth, you can begin to use a soft child's toothbrush. You should use just a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste or a non-fluoride toothpaste (like Baby OraGel) until your child is able to spit it out (too much fluoride can stain their teeth).

**Q: *When should my child first see the dentist?***

**A:** Ideally a child's first visit should be between two to three years. It really depends on the maturity of the child. We want the first visit to be a good one, and primarily get the child adjusted to the office experience before any major work is needed.

**Q: *Do I have to live the rest of my life with an unhappy mouth?***

**A:** No! The choice is yours.

**Q: *Can I change my smile and mouth condition?***

**A:** Dentistry today has the ability to raise anyone's smile potential to a much higher level. It is attainable and affordable and a worthwhile investment in one's socio and economic, as well as comfort and health related future. You only have one life to live. You might as well live it with the most comfortable, happy, energetic smile you deserve. A confident smile is life changing!

***Dr. DiPaula has a passion for making beautiful, happy smiles. Call us if you would like to see your smile potential. We offer free cosmetic consultations.***

FAQ'S