ORAL FITNESS FACT SHEET

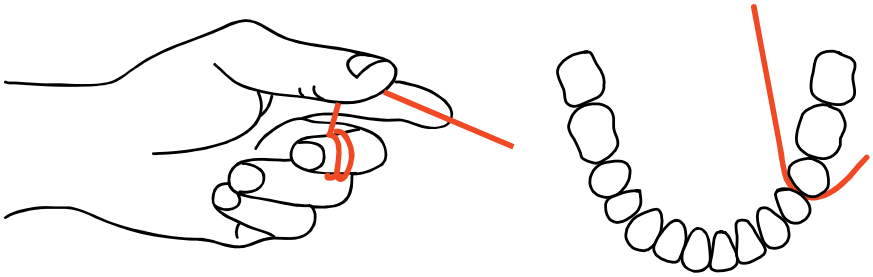
PMCS Your Mouth!

You control whether you get cavities or not. Taking care of your mouth the right way will keep you fit and ready. Just like a good motor sergeant uses a PMCS schedule (preventive maintenance, checks and services) to keep his/her vehicles running, you need to PMCS your mouth!

What should your PMCS schedule look like?

Daily

1. **Watch what you put in your mouth.** Everything that goes into your mouth affects your Oral Fitness!
   - Limit sugar-sweetened drinks (like sodas, punch, and sports drinks).
   - Limit sugary, sticky, or starchy foods.
   - Avoid or cut back on tobacco use, which can cause tooth decay, gum disease, and oral cancer.
2. **Brush two or three times a day, every day.** Brushing for about 2 minutes with **fluoride** toothpaste is one of the best ways to prevent cavities. Fluoride helps repair early stage tooth decay. Other brushing tips include:
   - Use a gentle circular motion and a soft toothbrush.
   - Do **not** rinse your mouth after brushing. Spit out the excess toothpaste.
   - Don't eat or drink anything for at least 30 minutes after you brush so the fluoride will stay on your teeth longer.
3. **Floss once a day.**
   - Flossing helps remove bacteria and food in between teeth, where a toothbrush can't reach.



Wrap the end of the floss around your middle finger and use your index finger to guide the floss. Insert the floss between your teeth (pull gently side to side to get it through the tight spots, but be careful not to saw your gums!) Gently move the floss up and down against the tooth in back, then against the tooth in front.

Monthly

Perform an oral cancer self-exam every month if you are at risk for oral cancer. Risk factors include:

- Tobacco, marijuana, or alcohol use.
- Sun exposure.
- Poor nutrition (lack of fruits and fresh vegetables).
- Viruses (such as Papilloma virus or genital warts).

Yearly

See your dentist for a dental exam and cleaning every year to detect problems early and to avoid becoming a Dental Casualty.

USACHPPM Readiness thru Health
Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness
http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/oralfitnessmain.aspx