

## **How to Take Care of Your Teeth**

### *For congenital heart patients*

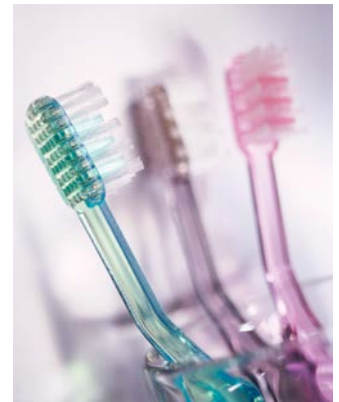
*This section of the Congenital Heart Conditions notebook tells how to care for your teeth and what to tell your dentist when you have a heart condition.*

Good dental habits can help prevent bacteria from entering your bloodstream and causing a life-threatening heart infection. Visit your dentist for cleaning and a checkup every 6 months.

### **Daily Dental Care**

In addition to routine checkups, adults with heart conditions should:

- Brush with a soft toothbrush twice a day, once in the morning, and once before going to bed.
- Floss carefully once a day, taking care not to hurt your gums.
- Check with your dentist or doctor if your gums bleed.



*If you have a heart condition, it is very important to brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush twice a day.*

### **Tell Your Dentist**

Be sure to tell your dentist:

- You have a heart condition
- If you have had any heart or valve surgeries
- If there has been any change in your heart condition
- The names and doses of all medicines you take, especially blood thinners such as warfarin (Coumadin)
- The names and phone numbers of your doctors and other health care providers.

### **Questions?**

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

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