

HealthyNews

Focus on Lifestyle





Dentists: How to Find One

Whether you're moving to a new city or working up the courage to schedule your first checkup in years, you don't want to trust your teeth to just anyone.

Here's how to find a dentist who's right for you.

- Get advice from family and friends. A recommendation from someone you know and trust is the best qualification a dentist can have, says Manuel Cordero, DDS, MAGD, a New Jersey dentist and spokesman for the Academy of General Dentistry.
- If you're moving to a new area where you don't know anyone, ask your current dentist to make a recommendation.
- Start slowly. Schedule an appointment for a checkup, cleaning, or perhaps just a consultation. Think of it as a job interview where you're the boss. Does the dentist act like a professional? Does he or she explain things clearly? Is the office clean and tidy? Does the staff treat you well? How much do common procedures cost? Does the dentist accept your insurance? It may also be worth asking whether the dentist does both amalgam (silver) and composite (tooth-colored) fillings. Many dentists no longer use silver, but insurance often doesn't cover the entire cost of the more expensive composites.
- Know your personal style. While some people prefer a dentist who's business-like and efficient, others need gentle compassion, Cordero says. Look for a dentist who has both good credentials and the social skills to make you feel as comfortable and relaxed as possible in the dentist's chair.
- Don't wait for an emergency. It's hard to judge a dentist's abilities when you're blinded by pain from an abscessed tooth.
- Ask the dentist to explain the overall goals of treatment. Ideally, he or she should be committed to both your appearance and your overall health, Cordero says. If one or the other doesn't seem to matter, start looking for a new dentist.
- Consider checking out the website of the Academy of General Dentistry to find an academy member near you. Members are required to get at least 75 hours of continuing education every three years, significantly more than other associations require. Dentists who belong to the American Dental Association are also encouraged to participate in ongoing education.

Health Tips:

Floss Teeth With Minimal Pain. Do it carefully, but not too hard or too soft.

(HealthDay News) - If you're not flossing because it hurts too much, it's time to rethink the way you floss.

The American Dental Association offers this advice:

- Be gentle. Flossing too vigorously could injure the tissues between teeth.
- On the other hand, flossing too gently may leave food between teeth that could lead to decay.
- Floss carefully between teeth. Any initial discomfort should only last a week or two.
- If flossing continues to be painful, speak with your dentist.

Diet Affects Your Dental Health. Eat healthier for your teeth.

(HealthDay News) - Diet plays a critical role in your dental health.

To help keep your teeth and gums in tip-top shape, the American Dental Association advises:

- Choose healthy foods from the five main groups: fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains and low-fat dairy.
- Drink lots of water.
- Limit snacking. Eating a meal, rather than just a snack, improves saliva production. This can help protect teeth from cavities.
- When you do snack, opt for something healthier, such as produce or cheese.



Caring for Sensitive Teeth. Changing your toothpaste may help.

(HealthDay News) - Sensitive teeth can be very painful, especially while you're eating something hot or cold.

To combat tooth sensitivity, the mouthhealthy.org website suggests:

- Using a special toothpaste designed to reduce sensitivity.
- Asking your dentist about a fluoride gel to strengthen tooth enamel.
- Using dental bonding, an inlay or a crown to correct problems that may have triggered sensitivity.
- Getting a gum graft, if gum loss is the cause of the problem.

Want a Brighter Smile? Suggestions for whiter teeth.

(HealthDay News) - A brighter, healthier-looking smile can do wonders to improve your appearance.

The Mouthhealthy.org website suggests:

- Whitening with an at-home kit, or having your dentist perform an in-office whitening procedure.
- Talking to your dentist about replacing damaged or discolored teeth with crowns, veneers or bonding.
- Straightening teeth with braces (even if you're an adult). Talk to your dentist about so-called "invisible" braces.
- Considering implants to replace lost teeth.
- Brushing at least twice daily and flossing at least once daily.
- Having regular dental checkups.

Red Beans and Rice

PREP – 30 minutes

SERVINGS – 4 servings

SERVING SIZE – 2 cups beans and rice

Calories 344

Cholesterol 2 mg

Sodium 331 mg

Carbohydrates 57 g

Total Fat 5 g

Saturated Fat 1 g

Fiber 9 g

Protein 18 g

Ingredients

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup onion, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 cup green bell pepper, rinsed and diced
- 1 Tbsp garlic, minced or pressed (about 2-3 cloves)
- 1 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 14-1/2-oz can low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup instant brown rice, uncooked
- 2 15-oz cans low-sodium red kidney beans, drained and rinsed

Instructions

1. Heat oil in a 12-inch sauté pan over medium heat. Cook onion, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes until pieces begin to soften but not brown.
2. Dice green pepper into pieces about 1/2-inch in size. Tip: Slice pepper lengthwise into half-inch strips. Holding the strips together, cut crosswise in half-inch pieces. Add green pepper to pan. Cover. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. While the green pepper and onion cook, mince the garlic.
4. Add garlic, cumin, and oregano to the sauté pan. Cook and stir for 1 minute.
5. Add broth and rice to sauté pan with green pepper and onion. Stir well, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes.



Deliciously Healthy Means, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

References

Interview with Manuel Cordero, DDS, MAGD, a New Jersey dentist and spokesperson for the Academy of General Dentistry.

American Dental Association. Frequently asked questions. 2010.

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