

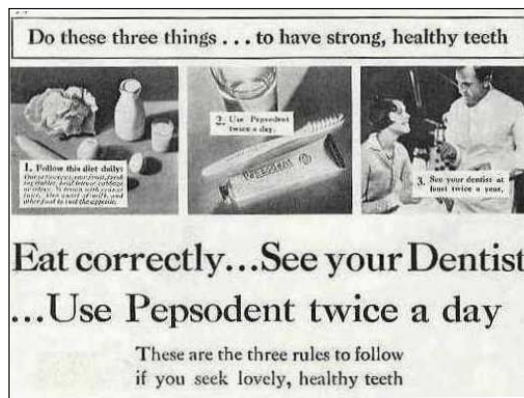
# Want strong teeth?

Brush, visit your dentist and eat healthy

**M**ost of us believe that in order to maintain strong healthy teeth, we should brush our teeth twice a day and visit the dentist twice a year. Did you ever wonder how we came to believe that? Was it because our dentist or dental hygienist told us it was so?

The message sprang up from a very effective advertising campaign by a budding toothpaste company, Pepsodent, in the 1940s. Prior to that, people went to the dentist only when they had pain and swelling and were not regular brushers. In fact, a household might have owned one toothbrush for the whole family.

In this era, we prefer “evidence-based practices” but if you are looking for validated research to support these two recommendations, you’ll come up short. You can be brushing twice a day and keeping current on your six-month dental cleanings and still be riddled with decay, infected with periodontal disease or be grinding your teeth



to pieces.

But wait! If you look more closely at that relic of a toothpaste ad, there is a third piece of advice for keeping strong healthy teeth... (drumroll please) ..... Eat correctly! Now there’s a concept for which we have an abundance of solid evidence. Since all disease (including oral disease) happens on a cellular basis, we must feed our bodies (i.e., our cells) well to procure health.

For strong, healthy teeth, that

includes avoiding candy, junk snacks, sweetened drinks, processed fats and excessive alcohol. It means eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day and rounding out with a variety of other whole foods: whole grains, nuts, legumes, and dairy/meat/fish from animals that were raised humanely and sustainably farmed.

I can envision a future where your dental hygienist and dentist offer nutrition coaching as part of your six-month preventive visit—all in an effort to keep your choppers strong, healthy and beautiful for a lifetime.



*Dr. Susan Maples is a dentist in Holt. She is also a speaker, health educator and author of Blabbermouth. Learn more at [drsusanmaples.com](http://drsusanmaples.com) or call (517) 694.0353.*



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