Are You at Risk for
Tooth Decay?

MetLife

Tooth decay is one of the most common diseases affecting adults in the United States. A variety of factors put people at a greater risk for tooth decay, but the three most important are: 1) how much bacteria accumulate on the surface of your teeth, 2) how frequently the bacteria come in contact with refined carbohydrates such as sugar, and 3) the strength or hardness of your tooth enamel. When bacteria and refined carbohydrates combine, the resulting acid can harm your tooth enamel.

The following questions may help you determine if you are at higher risk for tooth decay:

Question		points
Do you use a toothpaste that contains fluoride?	If NO, circle	12
Do you drink beverages that contain sugar or do you add sugar to drinks such as coffee or tea more than three times a day?	If YES, circle	12
Have you had more than two new cavities in the last three years?	If YES, circle	14
Do you snack on candy or other sugary foods more than twice a day?	If YES, circle	12
Have you lost a tooth in the last three years due to decay?	If YES, circle	12
Do you brush your teeth less than twice a day?	If YES, circle	8
Does the water you drink and cook with contain fluoride?	If NO, circle	8
Do you have your teeth cleaned at least once a year by a dentist or a dental hygienist?	If NO, circle	7
Do you take any medicine that makes your mouth dry or is your mouth dry as a result of radiation therapy or some other condition?	If YES, circle	7
Do you clean between your teeth with dental floss or an interproximal brush at least once a day?	If NO, circle	6
Is it uncomfortable to brush areas where your gums have receded?	If YES, circle	4

Now, total up your points:

You should see your dentist and discuss your self-assessment. If your score is 30 points or more you may be at higher risk for tooth decay. The best way to help prevent tooth decay is to brush with a toothpaste containing fluoride, floss daily, avoid beverages and snacks that contain refined carbohydrates such as sugar, and have regular professional cleanings and periodic evaluations by your dentist.

More information on tooth decay is available from the American Dental Association at www.ada.org, the Academy of General Dentistry at www.agd.org, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research at www.nidcr.nih.gov, or by writing MetLife Quality Initiatives Program, 501 US Highway 22, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 or dentalquality@MetLife.com.

Please be advised that the information contained in this guideline is intended for general knowledge only and is not a substitute for dental or medical advice for this or any other specific dental or medical condition, or other advice from dentists or doctors. This guideline was prepared by MetLife, and was developed with input from the MetLife Dental Advisory Council. Members of the Council consist of practicing and academic dentists.

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Are You at Risk for Periodontal Disease?

MetLife

Periodontal disease can be caused by bacteria that collect on teeth and in the space between the tooth and the gum. If left untreated, periodontal disease results in the destruction of the bone that supports the teeth. It is the major cause of tooth loss in adults.

The following questions may help you determine if you are at higher risk for periodontal disease:

		points
Do you have diabetes that requires you to take insulin?	If YES, circle	20
Do you smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day?	If YES, circle	20
Do you have diabetes but are not required to take insulin?	If YES, circle	10
If you have been treated for periodontal disease, do you return to the dentist as often as recommended?	If NO, circle	10
Have you lost a tooth in the last three years due to periodontal disease?	If YES, circle	9
Do you have your teeth cleaned at least once a year by a dentist or a dental hygienist?	If NO, circle	7
Do you brush your teeth at least once a day?	If NO, circle	4
Do you clean between your teeth with dental floss or an interproximal brush at least once a day?	If NO, circle	4
Do your gums bleed when you brush or floss your teeth?	If YES, circle	4
Are you over 50 years old?	If YES, circle	4
Do your gums hurt when you brush or floss your teeth?	If YES, circle	3
Have you noticed your gums receding (shrinking)?	If YES, circle	3
Do sensitive teeth keep you from brushing as often as you'd like?	If YES, circle	2

Now, total up your points:

You should see your dentist and discuss your self-assessment. If your score is 15 points or more you may be at higher risk for developing periodontal disease. An effective way to help prevent periodontal disease is to brush and floss daily, to stop smoking, and to have regular professional cleanings and periodic evaluations by your dentist.

More information on periodontal disease is available from the American Academy of Periodontology at www.perio.org, the American Dental Association at www.ada.org, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research at www.nidcr.nih.gov, or by writing MetLife Quality Initiatives Program, 501 US Highway 22, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807 or dentalquality@MetLife.com.

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