DENTAL HEALTH

Key terms in oral health

Plaque	A sticky film of bacteria that builds up on teeth. Brushing removes it.
Tooth decay	Damage caused when acid made by bacteria from sugars dissolves the tooth surface and forms holes.
Enamel	The hard outer layer of a tooth. Acid attacks wear it away.
Gum disease	Swollen, sore or bleeding gums caused by plaque. Left untreated, it can damage the support around teeth.
Fluoride	A mineral in most toothpastes that helps strengthen enamel and reduce decay.
Free sugars	Sugars added to food and drink, plus sugars in honey, syrups and fruit juice. They are the main dietary cause of decay.
Interdental cleaning	Cleaning between teeth with floss or small brushes, where a toothbrush cannot reach.

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