

Brushing teeth for a healthy mouth

Most people know that plaque causes tooth decay and gum disease and are mostly aware that brushing and flossing removes plaque from our teeth. However, the importance of correct brushing techniques, brushing twice daily and flossing each day is often underestimated.

People often brush their teeth with little thought; after all, we do it every day how difficult can it be? Toothpaste is slapped onto the brush, the teeth are given a quick scrub and then the mouth is rinsed with water; this is simply not good enough to keep plaque from causing damage to the teeth and gums and is too often standard practice.

The correct brushing technique is a skill that can be taught and it will differ for children or people with mobility difficulties. It is best to have your technique reviewed by your dentist regularly to ensure that bad habits do not override correct brushing techniques.

Starting at the back of the top row of teeth, brush in gentle circular motions, angling the toothbrush to reach all surfaces, front, back, and hard-to-reach places. Be sure to brush your gums above and below the teeth as well as your tongue. Bacteria that cause plaque do not just live on your teeth.

Timing of brushing is important it takes a minimum of 2 minutes to clean all reachable surfaces of the teeth. For children under five, I generally recommend a minimum of 30 seconds, and under 12 at least one minute, otherwise 2 minutes for everyone else.



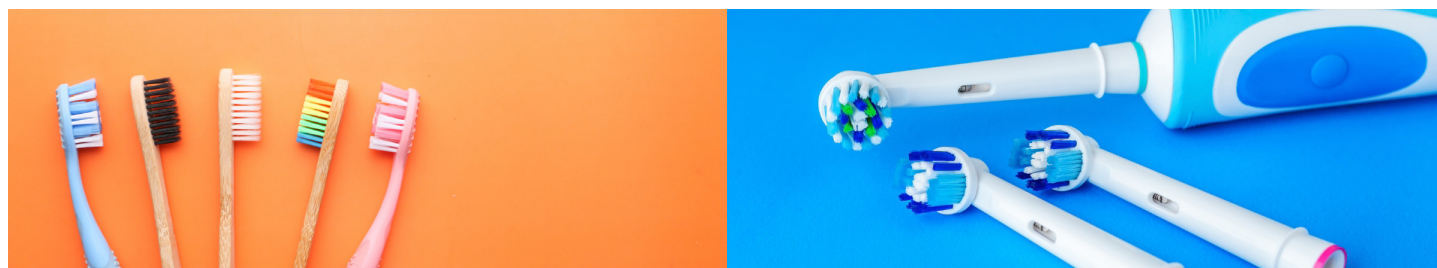
After brushing spit out the remaining toothpaste but do not rinse your mouth with water. This will wash away minerals that aid in replenishing the teeth and gums and will reduce protection between brushing.

Children under 18 months do not need toothpaste, just water and a soft-bristled brush. Under six years of age, children should use a low fluoride child-rated toothpaste. Everyone else should use a toothpaste containing fluoride. Ensure to supervise children until around the age of 8 or until they can be trusted not to swallow toothpaste.

Manual vs Electric

Manual and electric toothbrushes can both be highly effective in brushing teeth. Whether you choose electric or manual softer-bristled brushes are less likely to damage teeth and gums whilst removing the majority of plaque from the surface. Electric brushes can make this job easier as they are less physically demanding (an excellent choice for people with mobility issues), though it is important to remember just as much time is required to brush the teeth. The electric part removes the circular motion and micro-movements mimicked with your hand only.

Replace your toothbrush every three months or when the bristles start to spread apart. Reviewing your brushing technique at your regular dental check-ups is an excellent way to ensure good technique is maintained and bad habits are not picked up.



How to brush



Step One

Apply a pea sized amount of toothpaste to your soft bristled toothbrush



Step Six

Repeat the process on the bottom row of teeth. This should take 2 to 3 minutes, anything less and your teeth will not have been cleaned thoroughly.



Step Two

In gentle circular motions brush your teeth starting with the top row and at the back working your way to the front.



Step Three

Remember to also brush your gums above and below the teeth. Scraping debris down from above and up from below.



Step Four

Always brush every reachable surface taking special care at the back and hard to reach places.



Step Five

Always maintain a circular motion whilst brushing and remember to brush the insides of your teeth all the way around.

TOP TIPS FOR BRUSHING TEETH

- 1: Brush twice per day, before bed, and after breakfast for maximum results. 2 - 3 mins is key to ensure a thorough clean.**
- 2: Use toothbrushes marketed for kids to help make it fun (example - Favourite Disney or Marvel character). Incorporate music and games. Counting and timing games can also be educational.**
- 3: It is best not to rinse after brushing. The nutrients and minerals in toothpaste help to replenish and maintain healthy pH levels in your mouth between meals.**
- 4: Brushing alone is not enough, flossing should also be a daily ritual.**
- 5: Diet and lifestyle choices will impact your oral health. Even if you maintain a regular good oral hygiene schedule. Excessive consumption of sugary foods and drinks can still cause tooth decay and gum disease.**

Interdental cleaning (flossing) is essential for oral health

Interdental cleaning most commonly known as flossing is one of the most important aspects of cleaning your teeth, this is because over 30% of your teeth surface is between each tooth a place where a toothbrush will not reach. Toothpicks and dental floss are the most common tools used for flossing, however, in recent years, flossettes, picksters, and interdental brushes have become popular and useful tools. When used correctly these new tools are more efficient than traditional floss and toothpicks.

It is always best to have your technique reviewed by your dentist and experiment with the different tools to find which tool best suits you. Many of the new products make cleaning between teeth easier especially for children and people with mobility issues, as there is no need to wrap the floss around fingers. However, it is always best to know the basics and fundamentals. Children should start interdental cleaning as soon as two teeth are in contact with each other. Children will require aid until they are capable of cleaning between the gaps themselves.



Making it Routine

The chances of plaque forming increase the longer food remains stuck between teeth. Frequent Interdental cleaning will result in less time for bacteria to grow and reduce the chances of gum disease and tooth decay. Hence, why routine is so important. Ideally, it would be best to clean between your teeth after each meal; however, this is often impractical. Find a time of day when Interdental cleaning can be achieved without distractions to ensure the gaps between teeth are cleaned thoroughly.

Braces

Interdental cleaning for people with braces or other mouth appliances is of high importance as the appliances create more nooks and crannies for bacteria to grow and form. Interdental brushes or a floss threader will be of great use to cleaning around the appliance. Your dentist will demonstrate and discuss the correct flossing technique and the best options available.

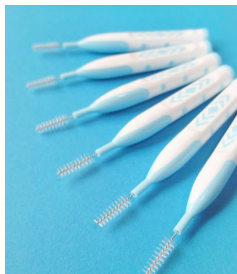
Floss



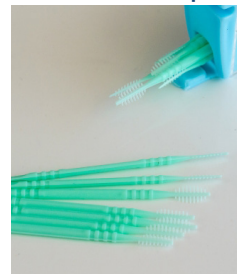
Flossette (flosser)



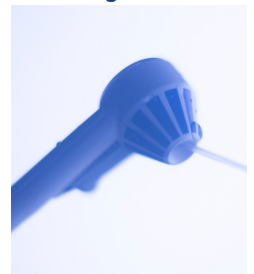
Interdental Brush



Interdental Tips

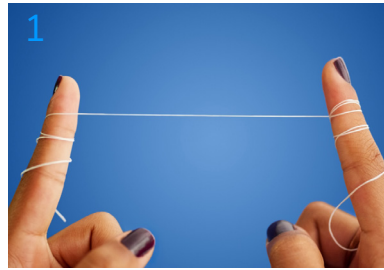


Irigators



How to use floss & interdental cleaners

Floss



1 Wrap the majority of a 30cm length of floss around your index or middle finger on one hand and a smaller amount on the other hand, leaving a few centimeters between each finger.



2 Gentle slide the floss between the gaps of your teeth, angle the tool to rub against both sides of each tooth. scrape and slide in gentle circular motions from gum line to edge of the teeth.



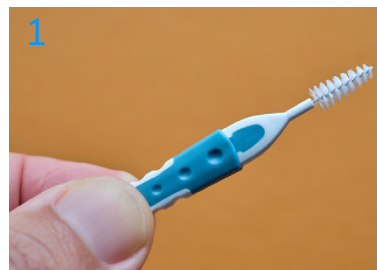
2 Gripping the floss with your thumbs and fingers, slide the floss between the gaps of your teeth, in a saw-like motion to scrape both sides of each tooth.



3 Different angles will be required for the top, bottom and front and back teeth. Do so in a pattern starting from the top to ensure you don't miss a gap.



3 Remove the floss from the cleaned gap and wrap the dirty part of the floss around one finger whilst unwrapping a fresh clean section. move to the next gap.



Interdental brushes & tips

1 Like flossettes or flossers, Interdental brushes can be cleaned and reused and are excellent for people with braces and mouth apparatus. grip the interdental brush between your thumb and forefingers.

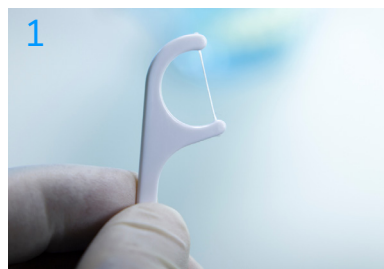


4 Thoroughly work your way between all teeth on both upper and lower rows. Discard floss and spit out any debris. Rinse your mouth with water.



2 Slide the interdental brush or tip in between your teeth starting at the gum line. twist to help ease it through, do not force it. Gently push and pull the brush between your teeth.

Flossettes & Flossers



1 Grip the flosser between thumb and index finger. Flossers are extremely useful for; hard to reach places, young children and the mobility impaired. These can be cleaned and reused.



3 There are many sizes and tip types, find the one that best suits your mouth and needs. For Braces angle the brush to slide in between the brace and too surface scrubbing up and down in circular motions.