

Oral Hygiene Guidelines

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO BRUSH MY TEETH?

Use gentle circles with the brush at a 45-degree angle to the long axis of the tooth at the gum/tooth junction. Avoid vigorous back and forth motion which seems to cause more tooth abrasion. Brushing for two to three minutes in a systematic manner while consciously brushing every surface of each tooth seems to prevent over brushing of one or more teeth. The tongue side of your teeth are cleaned best with End tuft brushes.

WHAT IS BETTER? A MANUAL OR AN ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSH

I believe they are mutually beneficial. Manual, round headed electric (Oral B type) and Sonicare type tend to clean differently. I use a manual in the morning and an Oral B iO before bedtime. A Sonicare tends to work best for patients with minimal recession and space between their teeth. For patients with longer teeth and space between them, an Oral B cleans more effectively. To clean effectively both types of electric need to be used tooth by tooth and require 30 second to brush an eighth of the mouth. Please remember to remove the brush from Sonicare, Oral B or other electric toothbrush, rinse the parts and keep separate between uses.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO BRUSH?

Amazingly, we seem to be better off brushing before meals or at least one hour after meals. Acidic foods and beverages can soften the tooth surface enough to facilitate its removal by vigorous brushing.

WHY ARE ACIDIC BEVERAGES AND FOODS BAD FOR OUR TEETH? HOW DO ACIDIC FOODS AND BEVERAGES AFFECT OUR TEETH?

A 2007 study by D. Bartlett showed to brush away 1 mm of enamel it takes 2500 years using a toothbrush and water, 100 years using a toothbrush with toothpaste, and only 2 years of brushing with toothpaste if you brush after your teeth are exposed to acidic foods, acidic beverages or stomach acid.

HOW CAN I AVOID STAINING MY TEETH?

Dark pigmented liquids like tea, coffee, red wine, juices and smoking stain plaque initially (and the tooth through prolonged exposure). Therefore, you can reduce the amount of stain you get by brushing before you have these types of items - especially in the morning before that first cup of tea, coffee or orange juice.

HOW MANY TIMES A DAY SHOULD I BRUSH?

Two thorough brushings, before breakfast and at bedtime seem to strike a balance between health and minimizing the tooth erosion from over brushing.

WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND SNACKS?

The bacteria in plaque produce acid for the length of time sugar or foods containing carbohydrates that can be converted into sugars are stuck to our teeth and for twenty minutes thereafter. Rinsing with a couple of mouth full of water does an excellent job of reducing tooth decay by diluting that acid. Also, flossing or using soft picks

HOW ABOUT SUGARLESS MINTS OR GUM?

For reducing acid production after a meal, suck on mints with Xylitol as the only sugar. Ideally, suck on a mint for 10 min, take a break, and suck on a new mint for 10 more minutes. (For patients with a high decay rate, suck on two mints 4X/day.) I prefer mints to gum because there is some evidence that chewing gum can put extra stress on our teeth, it can worsen temporomandibular dysfunction and it is made from synthetic polymers.

WHAT ARE COMMON ACIDIC BEVERAGES?

Some of the most common acidic beverages are black coffee, sparkling water, fruit juice, water with lemon, soft drinks, beer and wine. Drinks which contain sugar like sports drinks can be particularly harmful to teeth. When consumed over a long period of time, they can cause a high decay rate in young and old alike.

WHAT IS THE BEST TOOTHPASTE TO USE?

The less abrasive, the better! Our first choice for toothpaste is Arm & Hammer PeroxiCare or Arm & Hammer DentalCare. Historically, whitening toothpastes worked by abrasively removing stains and tooth structure. This can make teeth darker over time as the lighter enamel becomes thinner allowing the darker dentin to show

through. Hydroxyapatite toothpastes have potential to be as effective in reducing decay as fluoride containing toothpaste.

WHEN SHOULD I FLOSS OR USE SMALL BRUSHES BETWEEN MY TEETH?

The best time to floss or using small brushes (i.e. GUM Soft-Picks or PROXABUSH) between your teeth is before you brush your teeth. (This helps to dislodge the plaque and food particles between your teeth.) If you have problems with staining or tartar buildup between your front teeth, put a little toothpaste in these areas and use the floss or a small brush to help clean these areas better.

HOW CAN I REVERSE EARLY CAVITIES BETWEEN MY TEETH?

You can remineralize early cavities by rinsing with a fluoride rinse (ACT). An alternative is: Before bedtime, brush normally, then dip a small brush in a fluoride containing toothpaste and brush in between your teeth. Spit out the excess and avoid rinsing. Remember to limit the time your teeth are exposed to sugar or simple carbohydrates which cause the decay.

WHAT IS THE BEST MOUTHWASH TO USE?

Antimicrobial mouthwashes reduce both good and bad bacteria in our mouths. Overusing them can lead to gum disease and tooth decay caused by resistant bacteria. In some cases, lead to a yeast infection. Simpler may be best. A solution of bleach (8.25% Clorox) and water ($\frac{1}{4}$ tsp bleach to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water) two times a week has been shown to be excellent at reducing gum disease. Another benefit of the bleach/water mouthwash is that is not acidic like Listerine.