

A Guide to Help Improve your Oral Health

Is an electric toothbrush better than a manual one?

Not necessarily... while electric toothbrushes have been proven to remove more plaque in the same amount of time than the manual it all depends on how you use it!

The two main brands are Braun Oral B and Philips Sonicare. Oral b oscillates and rotates while Sonicare vibrates and pulsates, the brushes are completely different and your hygienist can advise you which would be more beneficial if you choose electric over manual.



Bring your toothbrush to your hygiene appointment so we can help you to use it more effectively.

What to look out for when choosing a manual toothbrush...

Choose a small - medium head brush with medium bristle fibers of differing lengths so that it can reach around your tooth and not just the surface protruding the most!

Many manual brushes have blue colour indicators on some of the bristles, once these have changed colourless half way or more down the brush then it is time to change it (average is 3 months).



Tips for more effective brushing!

If using a manual toothbrush ensure the bristles are not splayed (this is a sign of pressing too hard with the brush, which can abrade away the tooth surface). The time you have taken brushing will make the difference to how much plaque you remove, not the pressure!

Make sure you brush in front of a well light mirror, for 2 minutes, twice a day minimum. If using an electric brush you need to allow the brush to do the work, so small movements as you systematically hold the brush on each surface of each tooth. With a manual brush you need to systematically take the brush round in a small circular motion, sweeping around each tooth front and back and a scrubbing action on the biting surfaces of each tooth.... To test if you have removed all plaque, use your tongue to check all surfaces feel smooth.

Avoid having a glass of water to rinse with; it is more effective to leave the fluoride from the toothpaste on your teeth, so just spit the toothpaste out... but if you find there is too much paste in your mouth, just wet your toothbrush and brush round again.

How often should I floss?

This should be done once a day... it doesn't have to be the same time as when you brush, but before bed is ideal. The coated tape/floss is easiest to use if you have very tight spaces, we recommend Oral B Satin Tape/Floss.



There are floss holders you can buy if reaching to the back teeth is too tricky. Alternatively, Glide Flosspicks by Crest are the only pre-flossed disposable holders we recommend, which can be reused a few times.

Is there any alternative to floss?

Floss may not be suitable for your teeth... there is a range of methods and your hygienist can find you the most effective.

If you can fit interdental brushes, e.g. Tepes, between your teeth then they will remove more plaque than floss, again at least once a day is recommended.

Even when you don't feel like you have anything stuck between your teeth, after every meal food will be in between your teeth, if left this causes more plaque to form and risks gum disease, tooth decay and bad breath.



As well as interdental brushes there are also tapered rubber interdental brushes (e.g. Wisdom or Corsodyl are both good brands). These can be useful if you find the smallest Tepes would also fit but are too bendy or difficult to use.



What about my tongue!

Your tongue harbors millions of bacteria, which can also lead to bad breath. So it is important to remove this either with a dedicated tongue cleaner, or a separate toothbrush, by sticking out your tongue and sweeping from back to front.



Does mouthwash make a difference?

There are lots of different mouthwashes on the market, which can make it very confusing when choosing one!

There are daily mouthwashes, we recommend an alcohol free fluoride mouthwash such as Colgate Fluorigard (on the back of the packaging it will say how much fluoride there is, which should be 0.5%NaF). If you are at risk of tooth decay then use at a separate time from brushing, to get an extra dose of fluoride protection to your teeth, as your toothpaste will do that for you morning and before bed.

There are stronger medicated mouthwashes, such as Corsodyl or Colgate Peroxyl... these should only be used short term (i.e. 2 weeks) or unless your dentist/hygienist has recommended otherwise.

