

Tooth Brushing— Why?

Tooth brushing is an effective way of removing plaque (a sticky mixture of bacteria, food and debris) from your teeth. Removal of plaque at least twice per day can help prevent tooth decay and periodontal (gum) disease.

Select a toothbrush that will provide easy access to all areas of your mouth; one with a small head (1 inch by 1/2 inch) that is flexible or with a flexible handle. The brush should have soft nylon bristles with round heads and a wide handle for a firm grip. Replace your toothbrush as soon as bristles show signs of wear—about once every three-to-four months. There are also a variety of electric or sonic brushes that work well. Call your dentist's office for a recommendation.

Establishing a daily pattern and a consistent approach to your brushing technique is important to ensure that you have accomplished adequate cleaning. One easy technique involves placing the toothbrush at a 45 degree angle to your teeth and gently brushing in an elliptical motion. Start on the same quadrant (same side, lower or upper) each time. Brush the outside of the teeth, the inside, and the biting surface. Repeat this action with the other three quadrants.



When you are finished, brush your tongue. Adequate brushing should take three-to-four minutes

There are other effective brushing methods that may be appropriate for you, depending on the condition of your teeth and gums. Bring your brush to your next check-up visit and have your dentist or hygienist review your technique.

Tooth brushing is most effective if done immediately after eating. It would be wise to keep an extra brush at work for after lunch or snack. Toothpaste is not necessary if you are using fluoride toothpaste at home once or twice a day. Just rinse with water when you are finished.