

Toothbrushing Toolkit for Total Health



Taking good care of your teeth and gums will help prevent tooth loss and keep the rest of your body healthy. Poor oral health has been linked to diabetes and heart disease.

When you clean the surfaces of your teeth, especially those hard-to-reach, in-between areas, you remove harmful plaque. Did you know that plaque is an accumulation of bacteria that constantly forms on your teeth? Even while you sleep, plaque is growing and putting your mouth at risk for:



Cavities



**Gum disease (gingivitis),
which causes your gums to
be red, puffy, and tender**



Bad breath

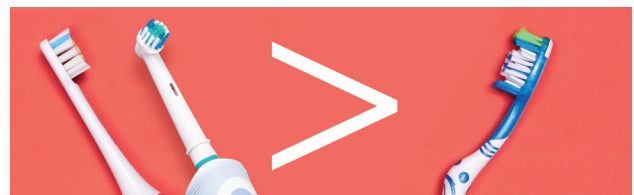
That is why it's important to brush your teeth every morning and evening.

Follow these tips to take proper care of your teeth and gums.

Toothbrush Selection



Use a soft or extra soft toothbrush.



Keep in mind that a power toothbrush is better at removing plaque than a manual toothbrush.



Choose your toothbrush size based on the size of your mouth. If you have a small mouth, a brush with a smaller head, or even a children's toothbrush, would be best.



Replace your toothbrush every 3 to 4 months or after you have been sick.

Toothbrushing

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Toothbrushing Basics

- Wet the brush if you choose.
- Place a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on your brush.
- Divide your mouth into 4 sections: top, bottom, left, and right.
- Brush all surfaces of your teeth: cheek side, tongue side, and biting surfaces.
- Brush for a total of 2 minutes, spending 30 seconds in each section of your mouth.



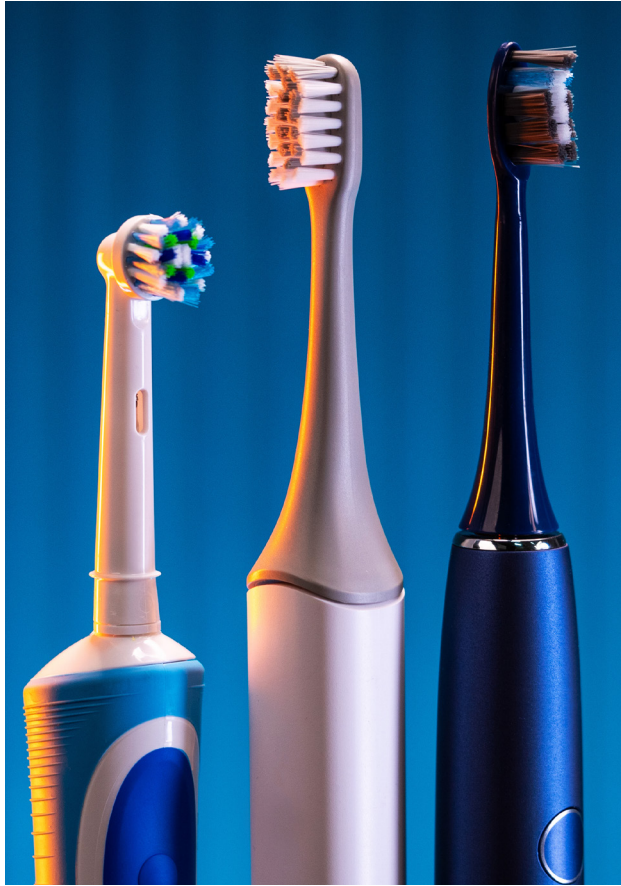
Using a Manual Toothbrush



- Place the brush at a 45-degree angle towards the gumline and place half the bristles on the gums and half on the teeth.
- Use a gentle jiggling motion to ensure the bristles reach the plaque under the gumline.
- Roll the brush away from the gums in a sweeping motion (roll downwards on the top teeth and upwards on the bottom teeth).
- Brush the biting surfaces using a back-and-forth motion.
- For brushing the inside of the front teeth, turn the brush head, place it along the gumline, and sweep upwards on the bottom teeth and downwards on the top teeth.

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Using a Power Toothbrush

- Place the bristles at a 45-degree angle towards the gumline with bristles pointed upwards on the top teeth and downwards on the bottom teeth.
 - Place half of the bristles on the gums and half on the teeth (traditional brush head).
 - Place the top edge of the brush head along the gumline with some bristles on the gums (circular brush head).
- Slowly move the brush along the teeth and gums, following the shape of each tooth.
- Brush the biting surfaces using a back-and-forth motion.
- To avoid splatter, turn on the brush once it is against your teeth and gums. Close your lips over the brush head.
- Let the toothbrush do the work. Do not put extra pressure on the brush head while you are moving it along your teeth and gums.



No matter which toothbrush you use, don't be a scrubber! Brushing aggressively in a back-and-forth manner can cause gums to recede. Gum recession leads to bone loss and, eventually, to tooth loss.



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Additional Tips



Remember to brush your tongue because it also harbours harmful bacteria. Place your brush on the tongue and sweep forward a few times. You can also use a tongue scraper.



Don't forget to clean in between your teeth using floss, dental picks, proxabrushes or a water flosser. See *Dental Hygienists Untangle the Floss Controversy* at dentalhygienecanada.ca for steps on how to floss.



Finishing with an antibacterial mouth rinse helps to reduce your risk of cavities while controlling bad breath. Rinse for 30 to 60 seconds.

Brushing twice a day reduces your risk of cavities, gum disease, and bad breath. It's a quick and easy way to protect your oral and overall health!