



Brushing Your Teeth

Learning how to brush your teeth properly is the first step to maintaining healthy teeth and gums. It helps to minimize the risk of tooth decay and gum disease, the major causes of tooth loss.

Before You Begin

While there are several methods of brushing teeth with a manual toothbrush, always ask your dental professional for their recommendation and be sure to follow their instructions. To start, use fluoride toothpaste with a soft-bristle toothbrush, and don't forget to replace it every three months. You need to brush for two minutes twice a day.

Using a manual brush

To brush your teeth correctly, spend at least two minutes using a recommended technique, which includes 30 seconds brushing each section of your mouth (upper right, upper left, lower right and lower left), both morning and night. Since most manual toothbrushes don't have built-in two-minute timers, you may want to have a clock handy so you can be sure you're brushing long enough.

Positioning The Toothbrush

How you hold the toothbrush depends on which part of the tooth you're brushing.

Step 1: Start with outer and inner surfaces, and brush at a 45-degree angle in short, half-tooth-wide strokes against the gum line. Make sure you reach your back teeth.

Step 2: Move on to chewing surfaces. Hold the brush flat and brush back and forth along these surfaces.

Step 3: Once you get to the inside surfaces of your front teeth, tilt the brush vertically and use gentle up-and-down strokes with the tip of brush.

Step 4: Be sure to brush gently along the gum line.

Step 5: Brush your tongue in a back-to-front sweeping motion to remove food particles and help remove odor-causing bacteria to freshen your breath.

Now that you've learned proper brushing technique, a little discipline in practicing it every day will help make it feel like second nature. It's one of the easiest things you can do to maintain the health of your teeth and gums.

Using an electric brush

With an electric brush, the brush does the work for you. Most brushes have a timer that will vibrate every 30 seconds, and this way you can divide the mouth into 4 sections. Position the brush on the gum line, holding it like a flute, and slowly move it along the teeth. The brush will clean in and around the teeth for you.

It is very important that you replace the brush head when it gets worn and splayed, as it will then no longer be effective.