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1963

Toothbrushing



Why should teeth be brushed?

The purpose of toothbrushing is to help clean the teeth and to aid in keeping the gums healthy. Keeping the teeth and mouth clean helps prevent diseases of the teeth and gums. A clean mouth also makes one feel and look better.

When should teeth be brushed?

The teeth should be brushed immediately after eating, if the brushing is to be of any value in preventing tooth decay. Quick, careless brushing will not clean the teeth and gums. If it is impossible to brush the teeth after eating, rinse the mouth vigorously with water.

How should the teeth be brushed?

The same method of brushing may not be best for everyone. Your dentist can determine the best method for you. The following method is frequently recommended:

1. Brush *immediately* after eating.
2. Brush each area at least ten times—the surfaces next to the cheeks and next to the tongue, the upper and lower chewing surfaces.
3. Brush the upper teeth down toward the biting edge, the lower teeth up toward the biting edge.

Place the bristles of the brush pointing toward the roots of the teeth. Rotate the brush so that the bristles sweep down over the gums and teeth in the direction of the biting or grinding surfaces.



Brush the outer surfaces of all your teeth, upper and lower.



Brush the inside surfaces of your back teeth, upper and lower.



Brush the inside surfaces of your front teeth, upper and lower.



Brush the chewing surfaces of your upper and lower teeth.

What type of toothbrush should be used?

It is important that the head of the brush be small enough so it can reach the surfaces of all the teeth and can be handled easily. Young children need smaller brushes than adults. A good toothbrush should have:

- a flat brushing surface,
- firm, resilient bristles (the dentist can advise on stiffness) and
- a head small enough to permit access to the surfaces of all the teeth.

Have at least two brushes and use them alternately. Replace them when the bristles become frayed, soft or loose.

Keep the brushes clean. Place them where they will dry quickly and not come in contact with other brushes.

What about electric toothbrushes?

The purpose of a toothbrush is to clean the teeth and gums. If an electric brush does this for you with safety and without harm to the teeth or gums, it may be used. Your dentist is the best person to advise you on this.

Powered toothbrushes may be especially helpful for a person who has difficulty brushing his teeth because of a physical handicap. They may also be helpful in brushing the teeth of invalids or others who need assistance.

What dentifrice should be used?

A dentifrice (tooth paste or powder) aids the brush in cleaning the teeth. A den-

tifrice usually makes toothbrushing more pleasant. It should be used for mouth hygiene purposes and for such special purposes as the dentist may prescribe.

Remember, it is the brushing, when and how you do it, that is most important. Your dentist can give you information regarding the value of any dentifrice as an aid in preventing tooth decay. An inexpensive dentifrice can be made by mixing powdered table salt ($\frac{1}{3}$) and baking soda ($\frac{2}{3}$). Baking soda or powdered table salt may be used alone, if preferred.

What about mouthwashes?

The purpose of using a mouthwash is to help remove food particles from the mouth. Drinking water is satisfactory for this purpose. Some persons prefer a diluted solution of common salt ($\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful to $\frac{1}{2}$ glass of water) or baking soda ($\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon to $\frac{1}{2}$ glass of water). Medicated mouthwashes should not be used except when prescribed by your dentist.



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