

ORAL HYGIENE GUIDE

Maintaining good oral hygiene is essential in the prevention of tooth decay and gum disease.

Our tips for maintaining good oral hygiene:

- **Brush twice a day** – brush your teeth at least twice a day for 2 minutes, in the morning and just before bed
- **Fluoride toothpaste** - Use a pea sized amount of fluoride toothpaste (1450ppm) when brushing, fluoride helps to make the teeth more acid resistant and is clinically proven to assist in the prevention of decay
- **Spit don't rinse** - Spit after brushing, DO NOT rinse with water or mouthwash, this rinses away the fluoride
- **Mouthwash advice** - If you wish to use a mouthwash, we advise using it at an alternative time to brushing to prevent rinsing away fluoride tooth paste. For example after lunchtime, or if you wish to do it when brushing then we advise after interdental cleaning and before brushing with toothpaste.
- **Cleaning between** - Use interdental aids at least once a day to clean between the teeth, these include floss or interdental brushes
- **Tongue cleaning** - Gently brush your tongue to remove bacteria and eliminate odours
- **Disclosing tablets** - Disclosing tablets assist by highlighting areas of plaque and bacteria by dyeing the plaque a pink or purple colour, they provide a good guide to where is being missed on brushing and enable self-monitoring at home for both adults and children. We would advise using disclosing tablets in the evening as they do dye the tongue and lips.
- **Regular attendance** - Ensure you have regular dental hygiene appointments and dental examinations. Regular dental appointments assist with oral disease prevention and include oral cancer screening.

Electric toothbrush

- Electric toothbrushes with small, round, oscillating heads are clinically proven to be more effective than a manual toothbrush. We highly recommend them and encourage all our patients to use them
- When using an electric toothbrush, angle the bristles 45 degrees toward the gum line and slowly roll around the contour of the tooth, aim to hold on each tooth for around 3-5 seconds and then move along to the next. You do not need to scrub the teeth as the brush does all the work for you.
- Change your toothbrush head regularly, ideally every 3 months or when the bristles are noticeably splayed.

If you're looking to get an electric toothbrush we recommend a rechargeable toothbrush such as the **Oral B Pro 2500 with a sensitive or cross-action** head.

The benefit of the 2500 is that is an affordable brush with the new longer lasting battery. The 2500 also has a pressure sensor which allows you to monitor the pressure which can cause gum recession or tooth wear.



Manual toothbrush

- If you're using a manual tooth brush try to ensure the head is no larger than the diameter of a pound coin. The bristles should be soft or medium in texture. Try to avoid hard bristles as they can cause traumatise the gums and cause progression of tooth wear.
- When using a manual toothbrush aim the bristles up toward the gum line at a 45 degree angle. Use small circular movements to massage the gum line. Try not to scrub backwards and forward as this can cause gum recession and tooth abrasion which can cause tooth sensitivity.
- Replace your manual tooth brush every 3 months or when the bristles are visibly splayed.
- If you wish to use a manual toothbrush we recommend using a **Sensodyne search 3.5. This meets all the criteria above.**



Interdental cleaning

Interdental cleaning is an essential part of an effective oral hygiene routine. Brushing alone cleans 60% of tooth surfaces, the remaining 40% of surface area is between the teeth. Therefore cleaning in-between the teeth is essential for preventing decay and gum disease.

There are various methods of interdental cleaning. Your dentist or hygienist will recommend the method that will work best for you.

Interdental Brushes

For larger gaps the most effective cleaning methods are interdental brushes or TePes. TePe brushes come in 9 sizes, your hygienist can advise the size that works best for you. Sizes can change over time due to reduction of inflammation, this is quite normal. If trying sizes yourself, you need a brush with some resistance



but not forcing the brush through.

Tepe EasyPick's are a popular alternative to interdental brushes, due to being tapered they adapt nicely into a variety of gaps. These are available in two sizes and your hygienist can advise which size is best for you.



Floss

- Flossing assists the removal of food and bacteria from areas between the teeth where spaces are too small to fit interdental brushes through. Floss can be optimised for crowded areas and tight contacts.
- When flossing your teeth, start with an 18-inch piece of floss, wrap most of it around your middle finger of one hand, wrap a small amount around the middle finger of the other hand. Hug the floss to one tooth in a C-shape, this prevents hitting the gum between the teeth with force which can be uncomfortable. Move the floss carefully up and down the tooth making sure it goes right down to the gum line. Avoid sawing in back and forward motion.
- We recommend using a floss tape such as **Oral B Pro Expert premium tape** or **Oral B Satin Floss**.
- **Flossettes** are mounted floss sticks which work well for those new to flossing or add a handle to assist with access to harder to reach areas.



Interspace brush / Single tufted brush

- Interspace brushes, otherwise known as single tufted brushes can be used to clean effectively around the gum margins and into periodontal pockets.
- The bristles are designed to splay, allowing for a more targeted clean in difficult to reach areas.
- Interspace brushes are particularly good for cleaning around partially erupted wisdom teeth.
- Your dentist or hygienist will let you know if they think this will be a good oral hygiene aid for you to use and can demonstrate angulation and use of this brush on the dental models available in surgery.



Tongue Scrapers

- Tongue scrapers are an effective aid to help eliminate bad breath
- They assist the removal of bacteria, fungi and dead cells from the tongue surface
- If you wish to use a tongue scraper, it's recommended to use it once or twice a day after brushing your teeth. Alternatively, you can use your toothbrush to gently brush the surface of your tongue using a downward motion.



Mouthwash

- Mouthwash is not an essential part of your daily routine. However, it can be used in conjunction with good oral hygiene practice to assist in prevention.
- If you choose to use a mouthwash, we recommend an alcohol free and contains fluoride 220ppm.
- We advise using mouthwash at an alternative time to brushing e.g after lunch. Using mouthwash after brushing causes the benefits of the fluoride in the toothpaste to be washed away.
- We recommend using a fluoride mouthwash such as Fluorigard or UltraDex.
- Chlorhexidine mouthwashes such as Corsodyl can be beneficial for occasional gum flare ups and excessive bleeding but for no longer than 2 weeks. Long term use can cause staining which is brown in colour. Try to avoid using Corsodyl unless advised by your dentist or hygienist.



Toothpaste

- When choosing a toothpaste, always ensure it contains fluoride (at least 1450ppm). The fluoride content can be found on the back of the tube. A pea size amount on the brush head is plenty
- For children under 6 years old, 1000ppm fluoride toothpaste is recommended using just a smear on the bristles
- Make sure you don't rinse the toothpaste away after brushing, just spit out the excess. In order to optimise fluoride uptake into the tooth surface the fluoride needs to stay on your teeth for as long as possible.
- If you have sensitivity your dentist may recommend using a desensitizing tooth paste to help ease sensitivity such as **Colgate Pro-Relief** or **Sensodyne Pro enamel**. Some of these pastes have an accumulative effect and need to be used for a minimum of 2 weeks to reach the full effect.

All of the above products are widely available at supermarkets, pharmacies and websites such as Boots and Amazon.

Below are some websites that may be useful to you to find out a little more about some of the available oral hygiene products:

www.oralb.co.uk

www.tepe.com

www.colgate.co.uk

www.ultradex.co.uk

www.dentalhealth.org

If you have any questions regarding your oral health or oral hygiene routine, please do not hesitate to contact the practice and speak to our oral health educator Ellie or our dental hygienist, Chloe. We are always happy to help.