

Tooth Brushing, flossing and use of interdental brushes are all-important aspects of a healthy daily dental hygiene regimen.

Brushing

Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Ideally, brush at least 30 minutes after eating rather than before. It is also important you brush your teeth in the right way.

- Place the head of your toothbrush against your teeth, then tilt the bristle tips to a 45-degree angle against the gum line. Move the brush in small circular movements, several times, on all surfaces of every tooth.
- Brush the outer surfaces of each tooth, upper and lower, keeping the bristles angled against the gum line.
- Use the same method on the inside surfaces of all your teeth.
- Brush the biting surfaces of the teeth.
- To clean the inside surfaces of the front teeth, tilt the brush vertically and make several small circular strokes with the front part of the brush.
- Brushing your tongue will help freshen your breath and will clean your mouth by removing bacteria.
- Do not rinse your mouth with water or mouthwash after brushing as this washes the protective toothpaste away. Just spit out excess toothpaste.

Replace your toothbrush on a regular basis because they wear out and become less effective in removing plaque. Most toothbrushes need to be replaced every two to three months.

If you are considering buying an electric toothbrush, studies have shown the most effective type is one in which the head has a rotating oscillation action - meaning the head spins one way and then the other.

Rechargeable electric toothbrushes are the most effective.

Flossing

Flossing is an important part of oral hygiene. It removes plaque and food particles from between your teeth and under the gum line - areas a toothbrush cannot always reach. You should clean between your teeth at least once a day with floss.

Your dentist or hygienist can advise you on flossing techniques, but the following tips may help:

- Break off about 18 inches of floss or dental tape and wind most of it around one of your middle fingers. Wind the remaining floss around the same finger of the other hand. As you use the floss, you will take up the used section with this finger.
- Hold the floss tightly between your thumb and forefingers, with about an inch of floss between them, leaving no slack. Use a gentle rocking motion to guide the floss between your teeth. Do not jerk the floss or snap the floss into

the gums.

- When the floss reaches the gum line, curve it into a C-shape against one tooth, holding the floss along the gum line, until you feel resistance.
- Hold the floss against the tooth. Gently scrape the side of the tooth, moving the floss away from the gum. Repeat on the other side of the gap, along the side of the next tooth.
- Keep to a regular pattern when you floss your teeth, which should help make sure you do not miss any food particles.
- Flossettes or floss picks are helpful especially when trying to clean between the back teeth
- Tape is a wider type of floss, which can fill the space between the teeth better. Try to choose an easy glide type of floss or tape.

Interdental brushes

The following tips may help when using a small brush to clean in between your teeth

- Choose a proximal brush size that will fit your interdental spaces. Note that it is very likely that more than one brush size will be needed. If you are not sure, let your dentist or hygienist choose the right size(s) for you.

- Don't use toothpaste unless advised to do so by a dental professional.
- Use the interdental brush once a day.
- Change brush when it is getting worn.
- Slide the proximal brush in at right angles very gently between your teeth. If it does not glide easily, work it in gently or choose a smaller size.
- Move the proximal brush full length back and forth until the interdental area is clean.
- As soon as the brush fits loosely in the space between your teeth move up to the next size, so it continues to be effective. You need to feel the interdental brush contacting the gum line

Water jet or oral irrigator

If you find flossing difficult you could consider a water flosser. A jet of water delivered through a fine tip that blasts debris and plaque biofilm from the teeth and gums. They are considered to be effective in reducing the plaque gingivitis and gum disease, helpful for people with braces, implants, crowns, bridges or gum pockets. Choose a rechargeable one with a large reservoir

- Fill the reservoir with lukewarm water
- Select and insert tip onto the handle pressing firmly down
- Select the pressure control for the water jet from low to high setting (choose a low setting when using the water jet for the first time)

- Always place the tip in your mouth before turning on the machine. Lean over the sink and close lips enough to prevent splashing, while still allowing water to flow from the mouth into the sink
- Turn on the water jet. Aim the water stream just above the gum line at a 90 degree angle. Start with the back teeth, Follow the gum line, pausing for the water jet to pass between the teeth. Continue until all areas around and between the teeth have been cleaned
- Turn the unit off.

See www.waterpik.com for more useful information

How do I clean my teeth?



01384 292666

Wall Heath Dental Practice
7 High Street
Wall Heath
West Midlands
DY6 0HA

Tel: 01384 292666
email: info@wallheathdental.co.uk
www.wallheathdental.co.uk