

Brushing

It's easy to keep your teeth and gums in good health. A simple routine of daily teeth cleaning, good eating habits and regular dental visits can help prevent tooth decay (cavities) and gum disease.

Your teeth are covered with a sticky film of bacteria called plaque (sounds like PLAK). If you brush twice a day and floss once a day, you can remove most of the harmful plaque and bacteria. But if plaque stays on the teeth, it will eventually harden into tartar. It is harder to brush and floss when tartar builds up near the gumline.

Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste to help prevent tooth decay. Select a toothbrush that feels comfortable in your hand and in your mouth. Replace your toothbrush every three or four months, or sooner if the bristles become frayed. If you have hand, arm, or shoulder problems that limit movement, you may find a powered toothbrush easier to use.

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What are some tips for brushing teeth properly?

There is more than one way to brush your teeth, so it's a good idea to ask your dentist which one to use. Here are a few tips to help you start a good routine:



1. Place the toothbrush against your gumline at a 45-degree angle. Move the brush back and forth gently in short strokes.



2. Brush the outer tooth surfaces, keeping the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gums.



3. Brush the inner tooth surfaces, still with the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle.



4. Brush the chewing surfaces.



5. Use the top part of the brush to clean the inside surface of the top and bottom front teeth. Use a gentle up-and-down motion.



6. Brush your tongue to remove bacteria and freshen your breath.

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