

How can I help?

Motivation

Three out of four people suffer with some sort of gum disease during their lives. Gum disease is caused by plaque, a collection of bacteria which sticks to the tooth surface. If left untreated, early gum disease can lead to periodontitis, a disease which can lead to the loss of teeth.

However it's simple to reduce gum disease. First check for one of the early warning signs:

- Bleeding gums when you brush your teeth
- Tender red or swollen gums
- Bad taste in your mouth
- Bad breath

You can help prevent gum disease by thoroughly removing all the plaque which builds up on your teeth. A good daily oral hygiene routine is very important and can be done at home.

Choose a small headed toothbrush (to reach tight corners)

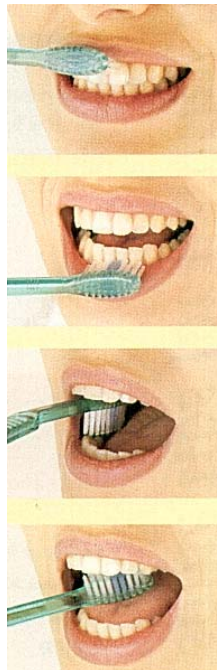
Technique

Make small circular motions using the brush

Clean all teeth and surfaces—outside, inside and biting surfaces

Pay special attention to

- Bottom of teeth near the gums



Change your toothbrush at least every three months (worn brushes do not clean properly)

Use a fluoride toothpaste which helps strengthen teeth and prevent tooth decay

Brush thoroughly twice a day for two minutes.

Consider an electric toothbrush

Be sure to reach all the surfaces of your teeth carefully

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Special points of interest:

- Electric toothbrushes remove more plaque than brushing alone
- Brush thoroughly twice a day for about two minutes
- A tooth left overnight in Coca—Cola will dissolve!

- Outside surfaces of upper back teeth
- Inside surfaces of lower back teeth

Between the teeth

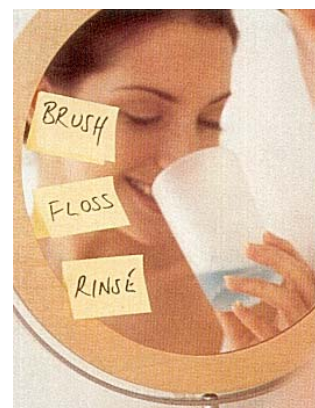
There are a number of products that you can use to clean between the teeth, such as: dental floss, dental sticks or special brushes. Ask your dentist or hygienist which one is right for you.

TO FLOSS

- Take 30—40 cm of floss and wrap around the middle finger of each hand
- Make sure floss is pulled tightly between fingers
- Using thumbs and forefingers, gently slide floss between two teeth

- Curve floss around each tooth in turn, move it up and down between each teeth and gums, as far as it will comfortably go under the gum line
- Repeat for each tooth (using clean floss if necessary)
- We can show you how to floss if unsure

Your gums may bleed a little at first—this will soon stop as the plaque is removed.



Help us to help you

Diet

The diet also plays a key part in your oral health.

It is the frequency of sugar consumption and the nature of that consumption rather than the amount that is important. For about 20 minutes after eating, the sugar levels in your mouth are high enough for plaque bacteria to convert the sugar into acid which will attack your teeth. If you only have sugar in your mouth 5 or 6 times a day, the teeth will recover and no lasting

damage is done. However persistent snackers or soft drinkers will have enough acid for the teeth to start to decay. Sticky sweets are particularly damaging as they can stay on the teeth much longer.

“it is the frequency of sugar intake, not the amount that is important”

A note about smoking

Smokers do unfortunately seem to suffer with other problems. Smoking affects the blood supply to your gums and smokers are more likely to suffer from gum disease, and delayed healing following an extraction for example. Furthermore oral cancer is much more prevalent in smokers. It is not our place to try to affect your lifestyle, but we will try to help you make an informed choice.



Patients who floss need approximately half the number of fillings as those who don't