



General Dental Homecare

- Brush 2x daily for two minutes each time. Plaque builds quickly and can turn into calculus (a.k.a. tartar) within 8 hours, so brushing 2x daily is critical to keep calculus to a minimum.
- Remember to brush your tongue after brushing your teeth. This will reduce bad breath and bad bacteria in your mouth that cause cavities and periodontal (gum) disease.
- Replace your toothbrush (or head) every three months. The bristles host bacteria and wear down over time, reducing overall effectiveness.
- Use a soft bristle toothbrush. Brush in small gentle circles to avoid damaging tooth structure and gum tissues. Aggressive brushing contributes to gingival recession.
- **Electric toothbrush users:**
 - The toothbrush is designed to do the work for you. Your job is to simply glide the toothbrush along your teeth at a 45-degree angle toward the gum line, allowing the brush to run for the full 2-minute timer. Not following these instructions could inhibit the toothbrush from effectively removing plaque/food debris.
- **Manual toothbrush users:**
 - Hold your toothbrush at a 45 degree angle against your gumline.
 - Gently brush your teeth using short, back and forth strokes that are as wide as your tooth. Include the chewing surfaces of your teeth.
 - Don't forget to brush your tongue! Include the outsides and surface.
 - Do NOT use long, aggressive strokes with a firm toothbrush as this causes gums to recede.
- Floss or waterpik daily to reduce plaque/debris accumulation in between your teeth. Your toothbrush alone can't fit into every small crevice to remove buildup that leads to gingivitis and periodontal (gum) disease.
- **String flossing:**
 - Using any type of floss is better than not flossing at all. For best results, using string floss correctly is the way to go.
 - When string flossing, cup the floss around each tooth and move it up and down along the side of the tooth to fully scrape plaque/debris off. Sliding the floss in between the teeth only gets the contact spots, and you need to get all the remaining debris that is sitting below the gum line. Floss behind your last teeth in the back, they need it too.
- **Water flossing:**
 - We like the WaterPik brand. To be fully effective, it must be turned up to at least a seven on the power dial. If at first this causes too much discomfort or pain, start at a lower setting and work your way up to a seven on the dial over several uses.
 - Angle the tip of the device perpendicular to the tooth, and direct the water jet at the tooth right along the gumline. Pause in between each of the teeth for a couple of seconds to remove interproximal debris.
- Mouth rinse:
 - Avoid mouth rinses that contain alcohol as this has been shown to dry out the mouth. We need a healthy flow of saliva to naturally rinse out plaque/debris and maintain a neutral pH in our mouths. Without this, we are at a higher risk for developing cavities.
 - Pick a mouth rinse with fluoride and use it daily. This will help strengthen your teeth.
- Drink lots of water every day. Avoid acidic beverages (like soda and juice). If you must drink beverages other than water, drink them quickly so the liquid doesn't sit on your teeth and cause damage. It is beneficial to rinse/drink water after consuming food and beverages to help neutralize the pH in your mouth. An acidic pH contributes to the formation of cavities.