



PREVENTATIVE DENTAL CARE AT HOME

During the lockdown, your dental routine at home is doing all the hard work for your overall dental care. To help you keep your teeth and gums as healthy as possible, we have some cleaning tips and general guidance on how to look after your smile at this time.



BRUSHING TOP TIPS: PICK THE RIGHT BRUSH



1 Electric toothbrushes are more effective at removing plaque from your tooth surfaces, but a manual toothbrush is perfectly suited for the job.

2 We recommend that you use a soft-bristled brush to protect your tooth enamel and gums.

3 Always look for a brush with a small enough head and bristles to reach into the crevices of your molars where food debris can hide after you eat.



BRUSHING TOP TIPS: CHANGING YOUR BRUSH



1 It is important to replace your toothbrush (or the head of the toothbrush if you use an electric brush) at least every three months as the bristles start to lose their effectiveness.

2 You don't need special equipment or covers to keep the brush clean. Covering your toothbrush can breed new bacteria and introduce it into your mouth. Instead, rinse your brush after each use.

3 Try to keep your brush separate from other toothbrushes in the same holder to prevent cross-contamination. Store your toothbrush in an upright position and allow it to air-dry until using it again.



ORAL HYGIENE TIPS: HOW LONG TO TAKE



1 — You should brush twice a day for at least two minutes.

2 — Divide your mouth into four sections and spend 30 seconds on each area.

3 — Some electric toothbrushes come with a built-in timer to help you brush for the appropriate length of time.



ORAL HYGIENE TIPS: GET A THOROUGH CLEAN



1 Clean the inside surface of each tooth, the chewing surface and behind the teeth. Pay attention to the gum line. If you have any restorative work, take care to clean the area carefully.

2 Remember to brush your teeth and gums lightly; brushing too hard can cause sensitivity, enamel damage and can even lead to gum recession.

3 Place toothbrush bristles at a 45-degree angle near the gum line, so that they are in contact with both the teeth and the gum. Brush using a back-and-forth, up-and-down movement. When you are done, repeat the same procedure for the inner surfaces of your teeth and gums.



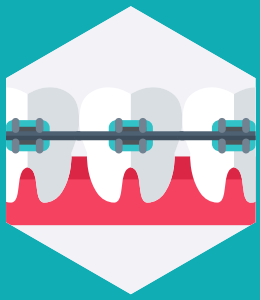
ORAL HYGIENE TIPS: HOW TO FLOSS



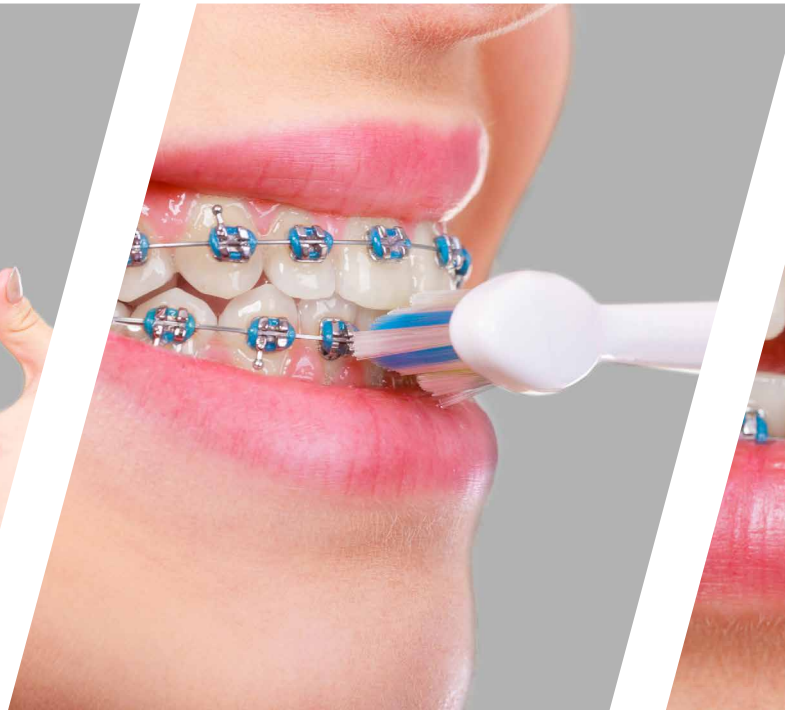
1 First break off a length of floss between 18-14 inches. Wind most of it around your fingers, leaving 1 to 2 inches between for your teeth. Hold it taut with your fingers.

2 Slide the floss between two teeth and gently glide it up and down. When you reach the gum line, ease the floss at the base of the tooth in a C shape. This cleans the space between.

3 Repeat the steps as you move from tooth to tooth. With each tooth, move to a new section of the piece of floss. Flossing helps to get rid of food residue and other detrimental substances stuck between the teeth. Get into the habit of flossing at least once a day.



ORAL HYGIENE TIPS: HOW TO CLEAN BRACES



1 It's important to keep your braces clear of plaque. Cleaning your braces makes sure your teeth stay as healthy as possible. You will need to clean after every meal as well as in the morning and evening.

2 Start by brushing under the braces, removing particles of food and plaque. Then brush above the brackets, trying to get as much of the tooth in between the brackets and wire as possible. Brushing at a 45° angle will help.

3 Next clean the other surfaces of your teeth, giving them just as much care. Flossing when wearing braces is essential, but can be fiddly with floss tape. Floss picks or brushes may be easier when navigating around the wires. Water flossers are also effective.



ORAL HYGIENE TIPS: AFTER CLEANING TEETH



1 Spit out after brushing but do not rinse so that the fluoride stays on your teeth longer and has a chance to work.

2 Try to avoid eating sugary foods after you've brushed your teeth and allow them time to remineralise. This helps teeth to stay healthy and strong.

3 Remember to clean your tongue. You can buy tongue scrapers that do the job, but you can use your toothbrush to clean away debris (just rinse off afterwards). This removes bacteria and also reduces halitosis.



TOP TOOLS: TOOTHPASTE & FLOSS

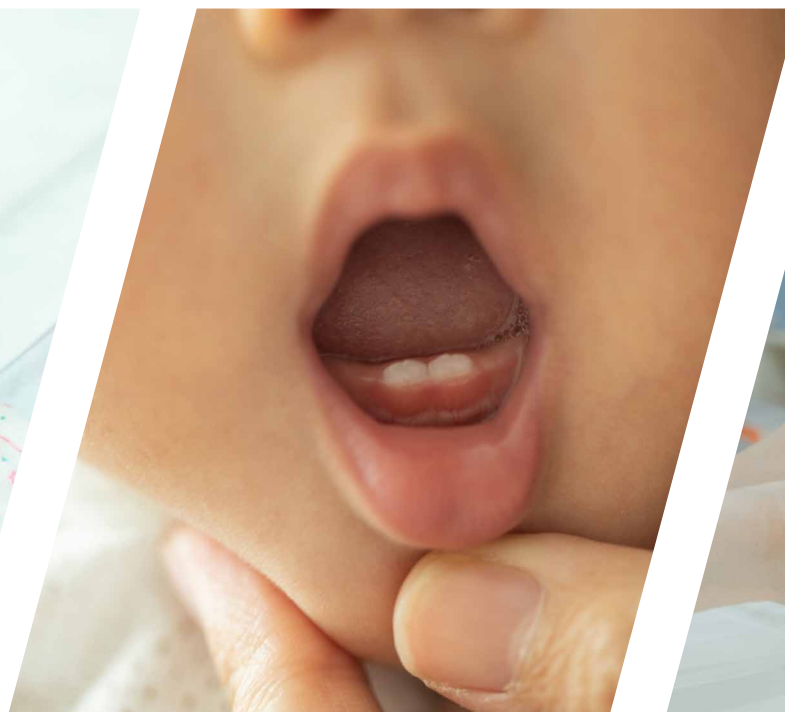


1 There are many different tools you can use to clean successfully between your teeth. Dental floss tape is the most common, but it can be tricky to get the knack of using it. Floss picks, flossers and brushes (TePe brushes or similar) are among other tools you can use to keep your teeth bacteria-free.

2 Make sure your toothpaste contains fluoride. While fluoride has come under scrutiny by those worried about how it impacts other areas of health, this substance remains an important component in oral health. This is because fluoride is a leading defence against tooth decay. It works by fighting germs that can lead to decay, as well as providing a protective barrier for your teeth.



CARE FOR YOUR FAMILY: DENTAL CARE FOR BABIES



1 Wipe a baby's gums with a warm, wet washcloth every day, even before they have teeth. This removes sugars from the gums and familiarises them with the feeling of brushing.

2 Once a baby has teeth, brush them twice a day with a soft baby toothbrush. Use a tiny amount of fluoride toothpaste, no bigger than a grain of rice. Children who are 3 to 6 years of age may use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.

3 Babies and toddlers should not go to bed with bottles. Milk and juice contain sugars that can cause tooth decay if they remain on the teeth for extended periods.



CARE FOR YOUR FAMILY: DENTAL CARE FOR KIDS



1 A child's primary teeth, which people sometimes call baby teeth, are just as important as their permanent teeth. Baby teeth help a child chew and speak and are the placeholders for the future permanent teeth.

2 Parents should brush their children's teeth for them until they can clean all their teeth thoroughly without help. When old enough to brush alone, parents should still keep an eye on their kids' brushing.



YOUR DIET & ORAL HEALTH: A BALANCED DIET



1 Eating a balanced diet protects your teeth by providing them with the nutrients they need. Dairy products contain calcium, strengthening enamel which reduces decay and erosion.

2 Crunchy vegetables and fruits, such as carrots and apples, can help to scrub your teeth, removing stuck-on bits of food.

3 Vitamins are important for oral health. Eating a variety of foods will help you get all of the vitamins you need to maintain that healthy smile.



YOUR DIET & ORAL HEALTH: REDUCING SUGAR INTAKE



1 Maintain a healthy lifestyle, including eating well and limiting your alcohol and sugar intake. It's good for your whole body, including your teeth, gums and mouth.

2 Use a straw when you have fizzy or acidic drinks, this helps the drink to go to the back of your mouth and reduces the acid attack on the teeth.

3 Sometimes high-sugar foods are obvious, but often food labelled "low fat" can also be high in sugar. A drink of water washes away these sugars, as well as hydrating you. Dehydration weakens your immune system and can also make your breath smell.



YOUR DIET & ORAL HEALTH: CHEW SUGAR-FREE GUM



1 Sugar-free gum has a positive impact on your teeth. Sugar-free gum contains xylitol, a sweetener that actually reduces the chance of decay and gum disease as it causes bacteria to die.

2 Chewing gum also increases salivation. Saliva re-mineralises your teeth, strengthening the enamel and keeping the teeth strong, as well as improving your breath.



YOUR DIET & ORAL HEALTH: DRINK MORE WATER



1 Water continues to be the best beverage for your overall health, including oral health. Dehydration weakens your immune system and can also make your breath smell.

2 It is recommended to drink water after every meal. This can help wash out some of the negative effects of sticky and acidic foods and beverages in between brushes.



YOUR DIET & ORAL HEALTH: AVOID SMOKING



1 Smoking harms the body's immune system, which makes it difficult for the body to heal tissues, including those in the mouth.

2 Smoking also affects the appearance of the mouth, leading to yellowing of the teeth and tongue, and it can give breath a bad odour.



ANY QUESTIONS?

This document is intended as a general overview, but for more detail on any of the topics covered, or for advice on your specific needs, please contact your dental clinic.