

BRUSH UP ON ORAL HEALTH BASICS

Your smile depends on simple oral health habits eg. Brushing, flossing and eating right. Some steps to protect your Oral Health are:

Brushing for Oral Health

Oral Health begins with clean teeth, which will prevent cavities and gum diseases.

1. Brush your teeth twice a day. Spend at least 2-3 minutes.
2. Use proper equipment. Use a small headed, soft bristled toothbrush, and a small amount of paste, equal to a pea size. If one has severe arthritis or is mentally challenged, use an electric or battery operated toothbrush.
3. Practice good technique. Hold your toothbrush at a slight angle — aiming the bristles toward the area where your tooth meets your gum. Gently brush with short back-and-forth motions. Remember to brush the outside, inside and chewing surfaces of your teeth, as well as your tongue. Recommended time to change your toothbrush is 3-4 months.
4. Keep your equipment clean. Always rinse your toothbrush with water after brushing. Store your toothbrush in an upright position, if possible, and allow it to air-dry until using it again. Don't routinely cover toothbrushes or store them in closed containers, which can encourage the growth of bacteria.
5. Know when to replace your toothbrush. Invest in a new toothbrush or a replacement head for your electric or battery-operated toothbrush every three to four months — or sooner if the bristles become frayed.

Flossing for oral health

You can't reach the tight spaces between your teeth and under the gumline with a toothbrush. That's why daily flossing is important. Do's and Don'ts of flossing:

- Don't skimp. Break off about 18 inches (46 centimeters) of dental floss. Wind most of the floss around the middle finger on one hand, and the rest around the middle finger on the other hand. Grip the floss tightly between your thumbs and forefingers.
- Be gentle. Guide the floss between your teeth using a sawing motion. Don't snap the floss into your gums. When the floss reaches your gumline, curve it against one tooth.
- Take it one tooth at a time. Slide the floss into the space between your gum and tooth. Use the floss to gently rub the side of the tooth in an up-and-down motion. Unwind fresh floss as you progress to the rest of your teeth.
- Never use wooden or plastic pick to clean between the teeth.

As long as you do a thorough job, it doesn't matter if you brush or floss first. However, flossing before brushing might allow more fluoride from your toothpaste to reach between your teeth.