



Your Teeth Are Precious Assets.



But putting them in a safe won't help...

ORAL HEALTH CARE

It pays when you care for them!



Dazzle with your Smile!

A brilliant smile can leave a lasting impression.

What makes a brilliant smile are a set of healthy teeth and gums. With healthy teeth and gums, you will also be able to enjoy eating and good overall health.

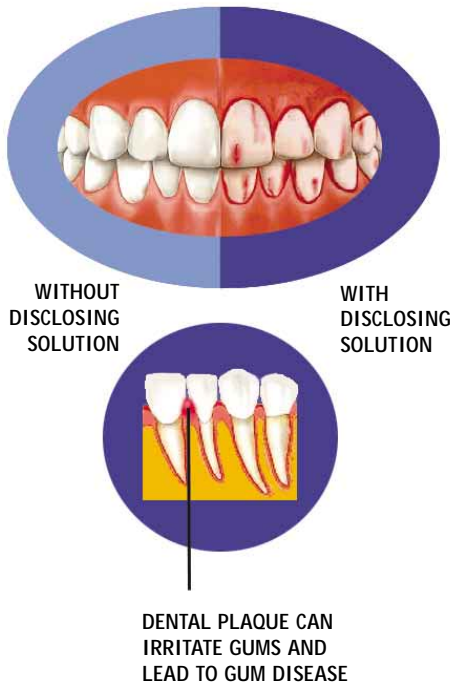
Brush and floss your teeth daily. This will ensure healthy teeth, gums and a fresh breath. It will also help remove harmful bacteria and prevent it from acting on food particles and forming dental plaque which is responsible for tooth decay and gum disease.





What is dental plaque?

Dental plaque is a sticky, invisible film of bacteria that forms on teeth (**Fig.1**). The bacteria in dental plaque can cause tooth decay (holes on the teeth) (**Fig.2**).



TEETH WITH DENTAL PLAQUE

Fig.1 Dental plaque is present on the teeth on the left side of the picture but it cannot be seen clearly. When disclosing solution is used to stain the teeth on the right side of the picture, the presence of dental plaque is revealed.

TOOTH DECAY & GUM DISEASE

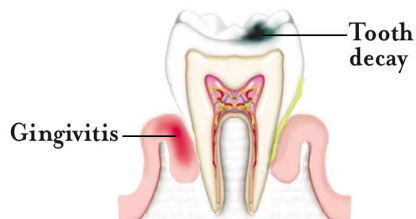


Fig.2 Cross section of a tooth and its surrounding tissues.

Other than causing tooth decay, dental plaque can also infect the gums and cause gum disease (periodontal disease). If not treated early, severe gum disease may infect the bone and tissues surrounding the teeth. This can cause intense pain and even loss of the teeth.



How can I remove dental plaque?

Brushing and flossing your teeth daily are easy and effective ways of removing dental plaque.

TOOTH BRUSHING

Tooth brushing involves cleaning the teeth and gums to completely remove any traces of dental plaque in your mouth.

To clean your teeth thoroughly, your toothbrush must reach and clean 3 important areas:

- (i) surface facing the cheeks (**Fig.3**)
- (ii) surface facing away from the cheeks (**Fig.4**) and
- (iii) biting surface of the teeth (**Fig.5**).

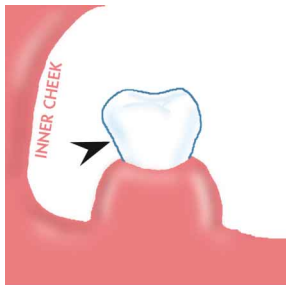


Fig.3

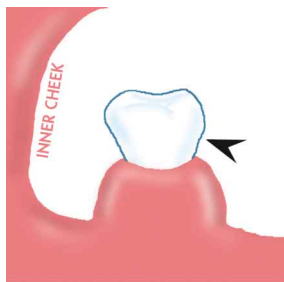


Fig.4

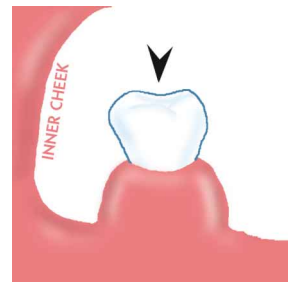


Fig.5





Toothbrushing

Brush your teeth in an orderly manner to make sure that all areas are well cleaned. Hold the toothbrush at 45° to the gumline (**Fig.6**) and brush in a back and forth motion (**Fig.8**).

You should divide your upper and lower teeth into 6 main areas when brushing. The upper teeth are divided into 3 areas: left, front and right. The lower teeth are similarly divided. Each area must be brushed with 8 – 10 strokes. A thorough tooth brushing routine will take at least 3 minutes.

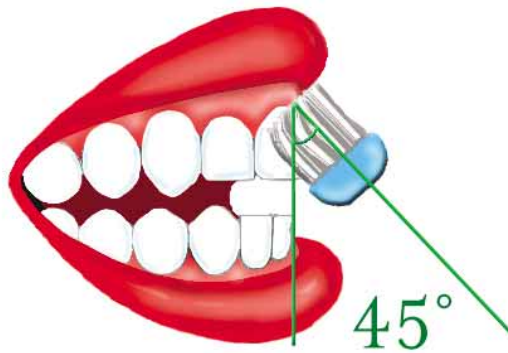


Fig.6 Remember to angle the toothbrush at 45° to the gumline so that you can clean the gums as you brush your teeth.





Step by step guide to tooth brushing

1. Start by brushing the outer surfaces of the upper teeth (**Fig. 7**).
2. Move systematically from the left to the front and finally the right.
3. Repeat the same steps for the lower teeth.



Fig.7

4. After cleaning all the outer surfaces of the upper and lower teeth, proceed to brush the inner surfaces of the teeth (**Fig. 8**).
5. Start with the upper teeth. Move systematically from the left, to the front and finally the right.



Fig.8



Toothbrushing

6. Repeat the same steps for the lower teeth (**Fig.9 and Fig.10**).



Fig.9



Fig.10

7. Brush the biting surfaces of the upper then the lower teeth (**Fig.II**).

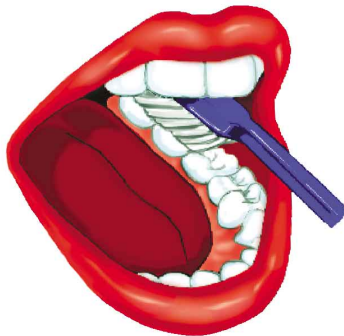


Fig.II





Toothbrushing tips

- * Brush at least twice a day, especially once before bedtime. We recommend brushing after every meal. However, if this is inconvenient, rinse your mouth thoroughly for about 20 seconds to remove any leftover food particles.
- * Choose a toothbrush with a small head. This will help you reach the back teeth and areas between the tongue and the lower back molars.
- * Choose a toothbrush with soft, rounded bristles. Hard and stiff bristles can injure your gums and wear down the enamel (outer layer) of your teeth faster than normal.
- * Select a toothbrush with a comfortable non-slip handle. It is easier to hold and it helps in brushing more effectively.
- * Replace your toothbrush every 3 months or as soon as the bristles start to wear out (**Fig.12**). A new toothbrush (**Fig.13**) can remove plaque up to 30% more effectively than a worn-out one. Moreover, splayed and worn bristles can damage your gums and teeth.
- * Do not share toothbrushes, even with family members. This can cause diseases to spread.
- * Use toothpaste that contains fluoride. Fluoride is a substance that can prevent cavities.

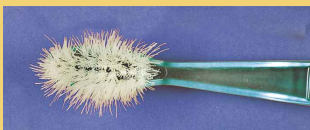


Fig.12 Toothbrush with splayed bristles



Fig.13 New toothbrush



Special brushes

ORTHODONTIC TOOTHBRUSH (FOR BRACES)

If you wear braces, it is especially important to remove food trapped between your braces and teeth. You can either use an orthodontic toothbrush (**Fig.14**) or a normal toothbrush. An orthodontic toothbrush has V-shaped bristles, which helps to clean around the brackets of the braces.

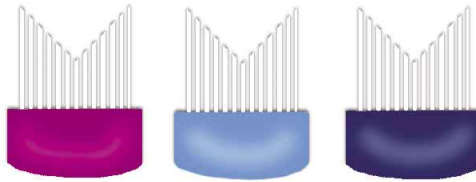


Fig.14
Orthodontic toothbrushes with V-shaped bristles.



Fig.15

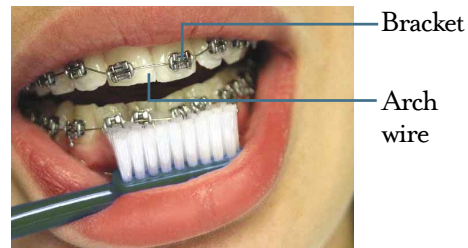


Fig.16

However, if you choose to use a regular toothbrush, make sure you clean around the brackets of the braces. Also, do not forget to angle your toothbrush to clean behind the arch wire (around both the upper and lower arches, see **Fig.15** and **Fig.16** respectively).





Special brushes

INTERDENTAL BRUSH

An interdental brush is a small brush with cone-shaped bristles (**Fig.17**). It helps to brush between the teeth. It can also fit between the wire of orthodontic braces and the teeth.

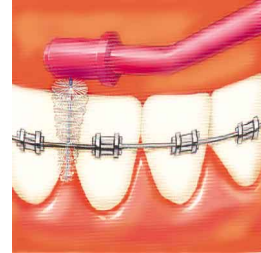


Fig.17
Interdental
toothbrush

ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSHES

If used correctly, manual toothbrushes are just as good as electric toothbrushes (**Fig.18**) in removing dental plaque from the teeth and gums. However, to the elderly who may find it difficult to handle manual toothbrushes, electric toothbrushes may be more convenient.



Fig.18
Electric
toothbrushes

STORAGE OF TOOTHBRUSHES:

When you are not using your toothbrushes, you should store them in a place that allows them to be aired (**Fig.19**). The toothbrushes should also be stored apart so that their bristles are not in contact with each other. This will prevent the spread of diseases through the toothbrush bristles.



Fig.19
Store toothbrushes
apart to prevent the
spread of diseases.



Flossing

Brushing alone removes **only** up to 60% of dental plaque on your teeth. Dental plaque also forms in between the teeth and below the gumline where the toothbrush bristles cannot reach. So you should floss your teeth regularly to remove dental plaque and food particles left in these areas.

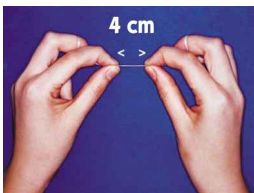


Fig. 20

STEP 1 Take about 45 cm of floss. Wind it around the middle finger of both hands, leaving a 4-cm section of floss in between (**Fig.20**).

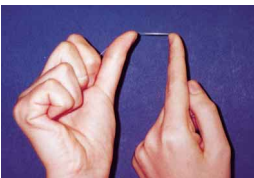


Fig. 21

STEP 2 Stretch the floss over your thumb and forefinger (**Fig.21**).



Fig. 22

STEP 3 Keep the floss taut and gently guide the floss between your teeth. When the floss reaches the gumline, curve it into a C-shape against the surface of the tooth (**Fig.22**).

Gently move the floss up and down and back and forth to clean in between the teeth.





Flossing



STEP 4 Move to the adjacent tooth surface and clean it in a similar manner (**Fig.23**).

Fig.23



Fig.24

STEP 5 Using a “sawing” movement, remove the floss gently when both surfaces are cleaned (**Fig.24**). Wind the used portion around one finger (the one holding less floss) and unwind a clean section from the other.

Repeat Steps 2 to 5 for the other teeth until you have cleaned both sides of every tooth .

Flossing tips

- * Practise flossing in front of the mirror. Try flossing your front teeth first before moving on to the back teeth.
- * Floss daily, especially just before bedtime.
- * If slight bleeding occurs when you are flossing, it means that your gums are not as healthy as they should be. Check if you are flossing according to the steps shown above. Continue flossing daily using the correct technique and the bleeding should stop. If bleeding persists, consult your dentist.



Flossing aids

THREADABLE FLOSS

Bridges are like fixed dentures. They are used to replace missing teeth in the mouth. You need to take care of your bridges, just like your normal teeth. A special floss with a stiffened end can be threaded between your teeth to clean the bridge (**Fig.25**).

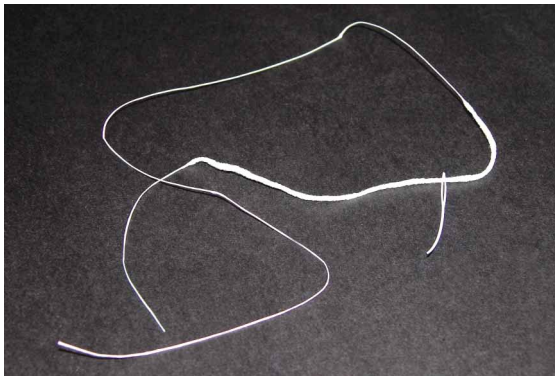


Fig.25
Threadable
Floss

FLOSS HOLDERS

Special floss holders (**Fig.26**) are also available for flossing the back teeth.



Fig.26
Floss Holder



Visiting the dentist



HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU VISIT THE DENTIST?

To maintain good dental care, visit the dentist at least once a year. As tooth decay and gum diseases are usually painless in the initial stages, you may not even know that your teeth and gums have been infected. However, your dentist will be able to detect such diseases and treat them early before any serious damage is done.

WHAT WILL YOUR DENTIST DO DURING YOUR VISIT?

Your dentist will:

- * examine your teeth to identify any potential problems
- * clean and polish your teeth to remove calculus or tartar (hardened plaque) and stains
- * advise you on the appropriate oral hygiene practices (e.g., tooth brushing, flossing) and
- * give you relevant advice on special concerns such as braces, wisdom teeth



Dental care tips

WHAT MORE CAN YOU DO?

- * Eat a balanced diet in order to obtain all the nutrients, vitamins and minerals needed to maintain healthy gums and teeth.
- * Avoid excessive sweet and sticky food. Try to eat sugary food only during main meal times when saliva production is higher. Choose low-sugar or non-sugary snacks such as fruits and nuts if you need to eat in between meals.
- * Reduce consumption of carbonated soft drinks as they contain acids, which can wear down the enamel of your teeth.
- * Do not smoke. Smoking stains your teeth, sours your breath and increases your chances of gum diseases.

GET READY TO DAZZLE WITH YOUR SMILE!

For a dazzling smile and fresh breath, just remember these simple steps:

- * Brush and floss your teeth at least twice a day, especially once before you sleep at night.
- * Visit the dentist at least once a year.
- * Have a healthy diet.
- * Do not smoke.