



TOOTHBRUSHES

I N F O R M A T I O N

Toothbrushes remove debris and plaque from the surfaces of teeth and gums. They also stimulate the gums to keep them pink and healthy. There are many different kinds of toothbrushes, the question is, which is the most effective at removing plaque?

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE TOOTHBRUSHING:

The toothbrushing technique recommended by most dental professionals removes plaque with minimal trauma to the teeth and gums. **Here's how to do it:**

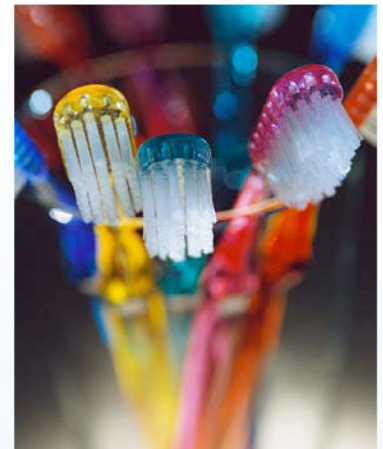


1) Hold the toothbrush handle in the palm of your hand with your thumb against the handle. Your thumb should be close enough to the head of the toothbrush to manipulate it with control.

2) Direct the bristles toward the gums at a 45 degree angle to the tooth. Place the bristles partly on the gums and partly on the tooth surface.

3) Gently vibrate the bristles and roll slowly, moving the bristles from the gums towards the top of the tooth. Slowly count to 10 as you do this procedure.

4) Repeat these steps up to five more times in the same area. For the front teeth, position brush on it's end and place the narrow end of the brush head 45 degrees to the gums and teeth, vibrate and roll as described previously.



A toothbrush should be:

- ★ durable
- ★ flexible
- ★ light weight handle
- ★ strong bristles that are not too rigid
- ★ easily manipulated
- ★ easily cleaned
- ★ meet individual requirements

Not all toothbrushes are appropriate for all people

Always use a soft or ultra soft toothbrush.

- ★ Softer bristles are more effective at cleaning the gum-line (where the gum meets the crown of the tooth) and are gentler on the gum tissues
- ★ Using a soft toothbrush reduces gum recession and toothbrush abrasion
- ★ Harder bristles can actually cause tooth enamel and dentin to wear away weakening the crown of the tooth

DID YOU KNOW?



Toothbrushes date back to 1600BC. Originally, they were twigs or sticks cut from tree branches. The ends of the branch were frayed by crushing the fibers to make bristles that are similar to the toothbrush bristles we see today.

TOOTHBRUSHES



ADAPTED HANDLES

Specialty grips can be custom made to meet the needs of individual residents. Some examples of specialty grips include:



a rubber bike handle:

This provides a better grip for residents that don't have good manual control



a tennis ball: *This is good for residents that cannot grasp the small handle of a regular toothbrush.*

Long handled toothbrushes are also available for residents that cannot fully bend their arms

The effective removal of plaque depends more on brushing technique than on the toothbrush itself

Factors to consider when choosing a toothbrush for a resident:

- 1) What is their ability to use a brush effectively without causing damage?
- 2) Are there physical conditions to consider such as problems with manual dexterity, vision and so on?
- 3) Are they motivated and willing to do their own oral care?

TYPES OF TOOTHBRUSHES

An electric toothbrush is a good alternative to a manual brush, especially if the resident has physical limitations that affect their ability to brush. When used properly, certain electric toothbrushes are known to be more effective than manual brushes at removing plaque. Electric toothbrushes have higher speeds and motions that cannot be reproduced using a manual brush.



It is important to read the directions before using an electric brush as they are all designed slightly differently. Technique is still important when using an electric toothbrush. If the bristles are not placed properly at the gum line, the gums can

become irritated. There is no need to apply pressure on the gums or teeth when using an electric brush, it is designed to do the work for you. Oscillating or rotating technology loosens and sweeps away plaque.

WHEN TO REPLACE A TOOTHBRUSH

- ✓ Toothbrushes should be replaced every 3 months (at a minimum)
- ✓ Replace toothbrushes immediately following a cold or flu to prevent re-exposure to bacteria or viruses
- ✓ Always replace a brush that looks worn or frayed



A "**Collis Curve**" brush is specially designed so that the bristles are curved. These curved bristles surround the tooth. This is meant to allow both the inside and outside surfaces of the teeth to be brushed at the same time.

It may be necessary to use a **child size toothbrush** for residents who have difficulty opening their mouths wide or have a small mouth. Children's toothbrushes have smaller heads and smaller handles. Smaller handles can also be good for residents with small hands.



Suction toothbrushes attach to suction machines and allow the care provider to brush a resident's teeth while the suction works to remove any debris or saliva as they brush. This is ideal for residents who have difficulty swallowing.