



BRUSHING YOUR TEETH

Your teeth are meant to last a lifetime! Avoid tooth decay (cavities) and periodontal disease (gum disease) by removing plaque daily.

Plaque is made up of germs that live in our mouths and is constantly forming on our teeth. It is important to remove this plaque every day to prevent these germs from making acid and other products that can cause cavities. Plaque build-up can harm not only your teeth but also your gums and the bones that hold your teeth in place.¹

You need to brush for two or three minutes at least twice daily to remove all plaque to keep your teeth healthy. Also, a toothbrush with worn-out bristles cannot clean your teeth properly. Replace your toothbrush every three to four months, or sooner if you've been sick with a cold or other virus because germs linger on toothbrushes and can get you sick all over again!²

A dental home care plan should include:

- Brush teeth two times daily with a **soft** toothbrush that is not worn out or frayed.²
- Use dental floss daily to clean areas that are hard for your toothbrush to reach (in between your teeth and under the gumline).²
- Use a toothpaste with fluoride.²
- Use an appropriate mouthwash.
- Use an anti-cavity, tartar control, antiseptic mouthwash.
- Eat balanced meals and limit foods and beverages high in sugar. For information on choosing healthy meal options, visit www.eatright.org.

Good brushing takes at least two minutes. To properly brush your teeth, use short, gentle strokes, paying extra attention to the gumline and hard-to-reach back teeth.²



Tilt the brush at a 45° angle against the gumline and sweep or roll the brush away from the gumline.²



Gently brush the outside, inside, and chewing surface of each tooth using short back-and-forth strokes.²



Gently brush your tongue to remove bacteria and freshen breath.²



For more information, contact the Division of Public Health, Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services, at 302-744-4554 and www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsm/ohphome.html.

Resources

1. American Dental Association. 2014. *Plaque*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved February 11, 2015 from: <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/p/plaque>
2. American Dental Association. 2014. *Brushing Your Teeth*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved February 11, 2015 from: <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/b/brushing-your-teeth>