

Learn About Dental Care

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1. How do you care for your teeth?

There are several basic recommendations to care for and maintain healthy teeth:

- Limit sugar consumption.
- Maintain a balanced diet, avoiding excess acidic beverages such as coffee, sodas (including sparkling water), acidic juices, citrus fruits, etc.
- Brush your teeth at least 3 times a day.
- Always use dental floss before brushing.
- Brush your tongue to avoid plaque buildup (a sticky layer formed by the accumulation of bacteria, saliva, and food debris).
- Rinse with mouthwash after each brushing to help maintain fresh breath and prevent some diseases such as cavities and gum issues.
- Visit the dentist once a year.

2. What kind of toothpaste should be used for dental care?

Use fluoride toothpaste, considering that the amount depends on the person's age. Using an inappropriate amount of toothpaste can cause undesirable effects.

Ask your dentist what is the right amount of toothpaste for your specific case.

There are medicated toothpastes or those with components other than fluoride for specific uses, which must be recommended by a professional:

- Toothpastes to reduce tooth sensitivity, when there is pain with cold, heat, or sweets.
- Medicated pastes for patients with gum disease.
- For children, it is preferable to use toothpastes specially formulated for them, containing a lower amount of fluoride.

Do not self-medicate; always seek proper guidance before using any of these products. Remember that no toothpaste actually whitens teeth.

3. How often should you brush your teeth?

Ideally, teeth should be brushed after every meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), after consuming food and drinks, and whenever a long period is expected without access to a toothbrush and dental floss.

Dental floss should be used before each brushing.



4. How should you brush your teeth?

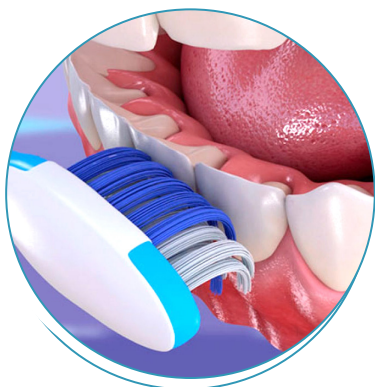
It is best to use a soft-bristled toothbrush, as hard brushes do not improve oral hygiene.

The bristles of the brush should come into contact with the gums. Use back-and-forth motions, brushing all surfaces of the teeth, always following a consistent order to ensure all sides are reached.

Finally, brush your tongue, as it accumulates many food particles and bacteria that can cause lesions, diseases, and bad breath.

Mouthwashes are suggested when recommended by the dentist, particularly for gum problems, bad breath, or to complement hygiene.

Note: The toothbrush should be replaced every 3 months.



5. Does dental floss replace toothpaste?

NO, NEVER. Dental floss is a complement to brushing and is absolutely necessary.

Flossing is the only way to clean between the teeth, where the brush bristles cannot reach. These spaces are where cavities most frequently occur. (See Health Letter: Learn About Cavities)



6. If my teeth are fine, should I still visit the dentist?

Dental visits should be regular (twice a year) even if your teeth appear healthy.

Important considerations

There are other types of lesions or diseases that can affect the supporting tissues of the teeth (gums, bones), causing them to loosen or be lost.

Additionally, there are many other structures in the mouth that can suffer damage or alterations, which can be detected and treated early to prevent major or irreversible issues.

We should visit the dentist regularly. This will make dental visits more pleasant, less traumatic, and less costly.

Recommended Reading

- National Oral Health Study. Ministry of Health (Minsalud).
- Oral Health Care in Adults Who Smile at Life. Ministry of Health (Minsalud).
- Clinical Practice Guidelines in Oral Health. Bogotá.
- Fourth National Oral Health Study. ENSAB IV.

Recommended Health Letter

- Health Letter 108: Learn About Cavities

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