



See your  
dentist  
regularly.

# Brush and floss your teeth everyday.

## The keys to keeping your teeth happy and healthy.

Brushing and flossing your teeth are the very best ways to preserve the health and longevity of your teeth. Plaque is your mouth's number one enemy. It's a tenacious film of saliva and bacteria that clings to your teeth and gums, leaving cavities and gum disease in its wake. If you don't show it who's boss by brushing and flossing regularly, it will thrive in its favorite environment: your mouth.

### The right way to brush your teeth

Always use a soft-bristled brush. Put your brush next to the teeth at a 45-degree angle. Move the brush back and forth in short strokes, several times for each side of each tooth, and brush the back teeth on all sides. Dentists agree: brush for at least two minutes — less just doesn't cut it. To get the most plaque-removing mileage out of those bristles, replace your brush every three months. Electric brushes might make brushing a little easier, but they don't let you off the hook. You still need those two minutes. Time is the issue, not speed. Electric toothbrushes cannot reduce the amount of time required for brushing.

### The truth about flossing

Floss is as important as a toothbrush in fighting tooth decay and gum disease. Experts advise flossing twice a day. If you haven't flossed in awhile, your gums may bleed when you do. This means your gums are inflamed and bacteria are present. Be happy. It means you've cleaned out the built-up stuff and taken the first step toward strengthening your gums. After a time or two, the bleeding will quit. Oral irrigators and toothpicks are not a substitute for floss.

### Choosing the right toothpaste

The first consideration in choosing any toothpaste, of course, is being sure that it contains fluoride and has the Canadian Dental Association Seal of Approval. Products with the CDA Seal have met the CDA's requirements for safety and effectiveness. All CDA recognized toothpastes contain a mild abrasive that works with your toothbrush to remove plaque. These abrasives in toothpastes do not cause enamel to wear away. More likely, enamel erosion occurs as a result of over-vigorous brushing. Tartar control toothpastes help prevent tartar (hardened plaque that may cause gum disease) from forming.

Some studies have shown they can reduce tartar as much as 36 percent. But these toothpastes do not remove tartar. Only a professional tooth cleaning can do that. Desensitizing toothpastes can reduce the tube-like channels that pass through the teeth and connect to nerves, or reduce the ability of the nerves to transmit pain. While these toothpastes can make it easier for patients with sensitive teeth to tolerate hot and cold drinks and food, it may be four to six weeks before improvement is noticed.

**To find out more about  
brushing and flossing,  
talk to your dentist.  
We care about you  
and your teeth.**



This information courtesy of your Manitoba Dentist