



After eating refined sugar, the acidity of the mouth drops below 5.5 in less than 5 minutes. Acid produced by mouth bacteria begin to destroy teeth enamel beginning at a ph of 5.5 or less.

Eleven dentist approved measures for oral home health care

1. **Brush long enough:** The American Dental Association recommends brushing a minimum of two minutes each time to remove dental plaque. For those who have devices in their mouth, like braces, a bridge, or implants, add extra time to clean around areas where food may get trapped on the device.
2. **Brush often enough:** Ideally, teeth should be brushed after each meal and before bedtime to remove bacteria and plaque. At a minimum they should be brushed twice daily.
3. **Brush the right way:** After placing the toothbrush in the mouth, tilt the toothbrush up so that it's at a 45° angle to the gums. Move the brush head from tooth to tooth using a small circular motion. This goes for the outer surfaces of teeth, the inner surfaces of teeth, and the tops or chewing surfaces of teeth.
4. **Use the right kind of toothbrush:** Most dental professionals will agree that a rotating, oscillating, electronic toothbrush or sonic driven toothbrush is better at removing plaque from the teeth than a manual bristle toothbrush. Oscillating toothbrushes may rotate at up to 8800 strokes per minute. Sonic toothbrushes may vibrate at up to 40,000 strokes per minute. A popular brand name oscillating toothbrush is marketed under the brand name of Oral-B®. A popular sonic toothbrush is marketed under the name of Sonicare.®
5. **Floss after meals and at bedtime:** Flossing is important. Failure to floss results in missing half the surfaces of the teeth where plaque can form causing cavities and gum disease.
6. **Brush the tongue:** The tongue forms the floor of the mouth. It is critical for speech and swallowing. It can, however, act as a trap for bacteria causing bad breath, dental decay, and gum disease. Use the toothbrush to gently brush back and forth several times with each brushing. Special tongue brushes may be purchased on the Internet that cost only a few dollars

7. **Don't brush too hard:** Whether using a manual or a powered toothbrush, the most effective way to clean the teeth is by repetition, not force. Exert the same amount of pressure as the amount one might use to ring a doorbell. Too much pressure may wear down the enamel surface and cause the gums to shrink and recede from the teeth forming pockets at the base of the teeth in which microbes can hide.
8. **Don't use too much toothpaste:** Adults need only to express a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on the brush, or one half the length of the standard toothbrush.
9. **Store the toothbrush properly:** Keep the toothbrush as clean as possible. Rinse thoroughly after using it to make sure toothpaste and any debris is removed from the bristles. Store the brush in the upright position where it can air dry. If stored with other toothbrushes, make sure they do not come in contact with each other. Don't store the toothbrush in a closed container since microorganisms that grow best in warm, dark, and moist environments may proliferate on the brush.
10. **Change the toothbrush or the toothbrush tip on an electronic powered toothbrush frequently.** The lifespan of a manual bristle toothbrush is about 3 to 4 months. After that, the bristles become frayed and do not clean the teeth well. Replace the brush. For powered toothbrushes change the toothbrush tip every 90 days.
11. **Prevent dry mouth.** Saliva provides a major source of defense for the oral cavity against dental infections, gum disease, and dental decay. Conditions that can lead to a decrease in the formation of saliva in the mouth include drugs, radiation treatments, diseases like Sjogren's syndrome, and failure to hydrate. Drinking water ensures optimal salivary flow. The water of choice should be distilled water.