

Your Guide To a Healthy Smile

Keep your smile healthy — no matter your age

To avoid tooth decay:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss at least once a day.
- Avoid sugary foods and drinks.
- Visit your dentist twice a year for a routine checkup and cleaning.
- Drink plenty of water, choose tap water if your tap water has fluoride.



How to Brush:

- Place a soft-bristled toothbrush against your gum line at a 45-degree angle. Use a back-and-forth motion to brush your teeth.
- Brush back-and-forth on the chewing surfaces of your teeth, holding the brush flat. Remember to brush the back of your teeth.
- Brush with fluoridated toothpaste at least twice a day for two minutes.
- Brush your tongue to remove germs and freshen your breath.
- Brush at bedtime to remove bacteria that can cause decay while you are sleeping.

Brushing Tips

- Always use fluoride toothpaste
- Replace your toothbrush every three months
- Never share toothbrushes, it spreads germs
- After brushing, spit-out the toothpaste. Do not rinse.



Use a small amount of toothpaste



Brush the outside surface of all teeth using circular motion



Brush the outer surface of all teeth using up and down motion



Repeat for inner surface of all teeth



Brush the chewing surface of all teeth



Brush the tongue



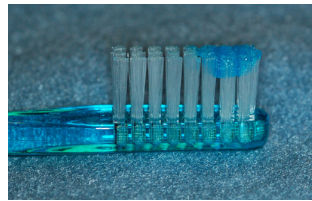
Rinse out your mouth using water



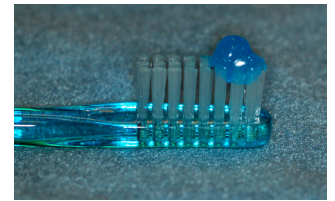
Congratulations!

How Much Toothpaste?

- Under age 3: Rice-sized amount
- Over age 3: Pea-sized amount



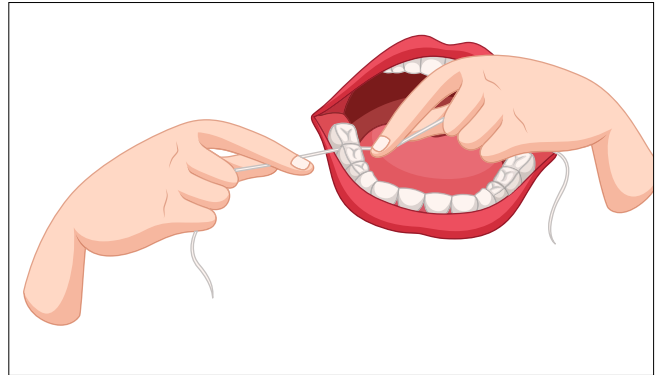
Under age 3:
Rice-sized amount



Over age 3:
Pea-sized amount

How to Floss:

- Wrap about 18 inches of floss around your middle fingers.
- Slide the floss between your teeth. Do not snap the floss into the gums, but guide the floss gently, just below the gum line.
- As the floss reaches the gum line, make a C-shape around the tooth until you feel pressure against your tooth.
- Gently scrape the tooth surface with the floss.
- Move the floss as it becomes soiled and repeat the process for each tooth.
- Floss every day.



Flossing Tips:

- Pre-threaded flossers also known as floss picks are helpful for children, or for those who have trouble with arm movement or find flossing difficult.
- All types of floss are OK to use: flavored or unflavored; wide or regular; waxed or unwaxed
- Always help children floss; ask a dentist or dental hygienist to show you how to floss your child's teeth.

How do cavities form?

- Millions of tiny germs live in the mouth.
- When you eat or drink sugary foods, germs feed on the sugar and make plaque.
- Plaque is a sticky substance that forms on the teeth.
- Regular brushing and flossing removes plaque from the teeth.
- If plaque is not removed, it will make acid which attacks tooth enamel (the hard outer layer of the tooth).
- Frequent acid attacks weaken tooth enamel and create holes known as cavities.
- As a cavity grows the tooth hurts when the cavity gets close to the tooth nerve.
- You can prevent cavities and pain by brushing twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

How does fluoride help?

- Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel and kills the germs that cause tooth decay.
- Health experts agree that drinking water that contains fluoride is one of the most effective ways to prevent tooth decay.
- Always use fluoride toothpaste when you brush
- Ask your dentist about fluoride varnish. Fluoride varnish is a safe and effective way to prevent, reduce, or even reverse the onset of tooth decay.