

## Personal dental hygiene plan

Visiting Smile Dental for a regular check-up-every six months-is an essential part of maintaining your natural smile for life. But it's just part of the plan. What you do between visits is also crucial.

Here's a personal dental hygiene plan that'll keep you smiling ...

### Fighting plaque-the cause of tooth decay

Flossing removes plaque bacteria from between the teeth and below the gum line, where the brush can't reach.

- Floss at least twice daily.
  - Choose waxed, Teflon-coated or fluoride floss or tape. There are special products for use with bridgework and orthodontic appliances, such as Oral B Superfloss.
  - Smile's dental hygienist will recommend the product best suited to you.
- Brushing removes plaque bacteria from the surfaces of the teeth.

- Brush at least twice daily.
  - Choose a soft, compact head toothbrush. Gently brush all surfaces of the teeth in a circular or up and down motion. Try holding your toothbrush like a pencil. And don't forget to brush your tongue. Better still, use a tongue scraper-ask your hygienist for details. Electric toothbrushes-such as the Oral B Triumph electric toothbrush range-can be more effective and easier to use than manual brushes.
- Wooden sticks, such as Oral B Dental Woodsticks, also remove plaque bacteria from between the teeth and below the gum line.

- Use once daily, or as required.
- Moisten the stick and use in a gentle in-out motion.

For thorough interdental cleaning, the Oral B Interdental Brush and Piksters are like a cross between a toothbrush and dental floss. Ideal for orthodontic patients.

- Use in a gentle in-out motion once daily, or as required.

### Maintaining a smile-friendly diet

The type of foods you eat, when and how frequently you eat, can all impact on your dental health. Acidic and sugary foods, and sugar/starch combinations (biscuits, cakes, fast foods), promote tooth decay.

- Cut down on acidic food and drink, such as citrus fruit, juices and cordials.
- Cut down on sugary food and drink, and baked goods, such as biscuits and cakes, especially between meals.
- Rinse teeth after consuming acidic or sugary food and drink.
- Avoid sugary or acidic foods such as chewing gum, soft drinks or chewable vitamin C tablets.
- Favour tooth-friendly snacks, such as nuts and cheese.

### Choose the right toothpaste

There is a wide range of toothpastes on the market. Smile's dental hygienist will recommend the toothpaste best suited to you. The following products are widely used by Smile staff and patients:

- Oral B Tooth and Gum Care/Colgate Total-anti-plaque and fluoride treatments
- Sensodyne with Fluoride/Oral B Sensitive/Colgate Sensitive-for heat- and cold-sensitive teeth
- Colgate Gel-for porcelain veneers
- Baking soda toothpastes-to neutralise acid
- CloSYS II-for halitosis (bad breath).

Don't rinse after brushing-just spit out the excess foam. This will leave you with a mini fluoride treatment every time you brush.

### Use a home fluoride/remineralisation treatment

Fluoride helps to inhibit tooth decay. Fluoride treatments are especially beneficial for inhibiting root cavities due to gum recession.

- Brush with Colgate NeutraFluor 5000 Plus toothpaste, as prescribed by your dentist or hygienist.
- Rinse with Colgate NeutraFluor rinse, as prescribed by your dentist or hygienist.
- Chew Recaldent Remineralising Gum.
- Use GC Tooth Mousse morning and night to remineralise the tooth structure (especially children, pregnant women and patients with dry mouth or high erosion risk).

Use a mouth rinse

- A saltwater rinse, used daily for several days, will help to promote healing of gums. (Dissolve half a teaspoon of salt in half a glass of warm water.)
- Savacol or Curasept (alcohol-free) can be used periodically for the treatment of periodontal disorders and mouth ulcers.
- Bonjela gel is also effective for the treatment of mouth ulcers. Mouth ulcers should be checked and diagnosed by your dentist.
- A bicarbonate of soda rinse-half a teaspoon in half a glass of water-will help to neutralise acids.

Wet your whistle

Saliva is an important ingredient in oral hygiene. To overcome a dry mouth:

- Take frequent sips of water. Aim to drink about two litres-about eight glasses-every day.
- Chew sugar-free gum to promote saliva flow.
- Chew hard, crunchy foods to stimulate saliva flow.
- Avoid smoking and caffeine, which suppress saliva.

How to prevent halitosis (bad breath)

- Brush and floss thoroughly and regularly to remove bacteria.
- Brush your tongue, or use a tongue scraper-ask your hygienist for details.
- Keep your mouth moist. Drink lots of water to prevent dehydration.
- Use rinses that are alcohol-free and inhibit the bacteria that cause bad breath-such as Closys II.
- Visit your hygienist for a professional scaling and education in dental hygiene.

Where to buy

Dental hygiene products, such as toothpastes, flosses and rinses, are generally available from most chemists and supermarkets. More specialised products, such as NeutraFluor, are sold through chemists only.

Dental hygiene appliances, such as the Braun Oral B Plaque Remover, are generally available at major department and electrical appliance stores. The Oral B Interdental Brush is available at larger chemists.

If you can't find what you're looking for, ask us and we'll track it down for you.

See also ...

- Avoiding acid erosion
- Kids & babies
- Sugar and your smile
- Your Smile Dental Hygienist