

A toothbrush is an important tool in the fight against tooth decay and periodontal (gum) disease. Your toothbrush helps remove food particles and plaque, the thin sticky film of bacteria that constantly forms on teeth. If plaque is not removed with regular brushing and cleaning between the teeth, it can harden into calculus, also called tartar. Tartar can only be removed by a professional cleaning in a dental office.



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**ADA American Dental Association®**  
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Preventive

# Basic Brushing

ADA American Dental Association®



Want to make good choices for oral hygiene products when shopping? Look for a toothbrush, floss, and fluoride toothpaste that display the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance.



The Seal is your assurance that the product meets the ADA's criteria for safety and effectiveness. Unless your dentist recommends otherwise, select a soft-bristled toothbrush in a size and shape that will fit your mouth

comfortably. With regular use, toothbrushes generally wear out in about three or four months. Worn bristles might not clean effectively. Get a new toothbrush when the bristles show signs of wear.

There are dozens of manual and powered toothbrushes that carry the ADA Seal. People with hand, arm, or shoulder problems that limit movement may find a powered toothbrush easier to use. Your dental office may also recommend particular products for your oral health needs.

Brush your teeth twice a day. Most dental professionals recommend brushing for at least two minutes. In addition, it's important to clean teeth with floss or another interdental cleaner. This helps remove food and particles from between the teeth that a toothbrush can't reach. Eating a balanced diet, limiting snacks and scheduling dental visits will help you keep your smile healthy for years to come.

## Basic Brushing

*The following is just one of several effective ways to clean your teeth.*



1. Place your toothbrush against your gums at a 45-degree angle. Move the brush back and forth gently in short (tooth-wide) strokes. Your dentist or hygienist can show you how.



2. Brush the outer tooth surfaces.



3. Brush the inner tooth surfaces.



4. Brush the chewing surfaces.



5. Use the top part of the brush to clean the inside surface of the top and bottom front teeth. Use a gentle up-and-down motion.



6. Brush your tongue to remove bacteria and freshen your breath.

*Eating a balanced diet, limiting snacks and scheduling dental visits will help you keep your smile healthy for years to come.*