

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR ORAL HYGIENE



HEART OF OHIO
FAMILY HEALTH



Excellent oral hygiene enhances your teeth and gums and overall wellness. Here are some important general oral hygiene instructions to keep your smile healthy:

- ▶ **Brush your teeth at least twice a day.** Use fluoride toothpaste and a soft-bristled toothbrush. (Medium or hard bristles can damage your gums and tooth enamel.) When you brush, place your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle toward your gums. This helps sweep away plaque and bacteria at the gum line. Be sure to brush all teeth surfaces, including the backs and sides.
- ▶ **Floss once daily.** You can't reach the spaces between your teeth with brushing alone. To clean these areas, you need dental floss. Take a piece of floss that's about 18-inches long. Wrap each end around your middle fingers. Using your thumbs and forefingers, guide the floss between two teeth. Wrap the floss snugly around one tooth in a "C" shape and clean it using about ten (10) up and down strokes. Next, wrap the floss around the other tooth and repeat. Continue this process on all of your teeth. If you have dexterity issues, you can also use interproximal brushes and dental picks to clean between your teeth.
WATER FLOSSERS – While water flossers are excellent for removing large pieces of food and debris, they can't remove the biofilm from your teeth surfaces. So, if you use a water flosser, be sure to use traditional dental floss as well.
- ▶ **Brush your tongue.** Your tongue holds bacteria like a sponge. Whenever you brush your teeth, don't forget to brush your tongue. You can use your toothbrush for this purpose, or purchase a tongue scraper in the oral health aisle.
- ▶ **Use an antibacterial mouthwash every day.** Antibacterial mouthwash helps keep harmful oral bacteria at bay. In addition to washing away food and debris, it also reduces plaque buildup. Be sure to choose an alcohol-free formula to prevent dry mouth.
- ▶ **Visit your dentist regularly.** Routine dental exams and cleanings are essential for good oral health. Many people do well with six-month visits. But, if you're prone to cavities, gum disease or other oral health problems, you may need more frequent appointments.
- ▶ **Avoid smoking and other tobacco products.** Smoking is a leading cause of gum disease and oral cancer. It's best to avoid these products altogether. If you currently smoke and would like to quit, ask your healthcare provider about treatment options that can help.

REMEMBER ▶ The best oral hygiene routine is one that you can practice consistently. Talk to your dentist about a personalized oral health regimen to meet your needs.