



# Tooth Brushing Techniques

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## Introduction

Oral health is a very important aspect of a child's general health, without which his/ her health becomes incomplete. The basic step in maintaining the oral health is to maintain the oral hygiene. The key to oral hygiene is tooth brushing. The objectives of tooth brushing are to remove plaque, clean teeth of food, debris and stain, and stimulate the gingival tissues. Proper brushing is essential for cleaning teeth and gums effectively.

## When should the child start brushing?

Before the first tooth erupts, after feeding the child, his/her gum pads should be cleaned using a clean gauze piece. Once the tooth erupts the child should be brushed by the parent or care giver up to the age of 6 years. Children between the age of 6 -12 years, should be monitored while brushing. After the age of 12 years they acquire the skill of brushing and they should be motivated regarding the maintenance of oral hygiene.

## How many times should the child brush?

The child should brush his/her teeth twice daily, once in the morning and once in the night. After each meal the mouth should be cleansed with water.

## What do you use for brushing?

Use a toothbrush with soft, nylon, round-ended bristles that will not scratch and irritate teeth or damage gums. Pea sized tooth paste should be used along with the tooth brush.

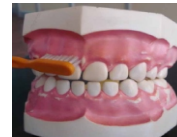


## How do you brush?

Place bristles along the gumline at a 45-degree angle. Bristles should contact both the tooth surface and the gumline.



Gently brush the outer tooth surfaces of 2-3 teeth using a vibrating back & forth rolling motion. Move brush to the next group of 2-3 teeth and repeat.



Maintain a 45-degree angle with bristles contacting the tooth surface and gumline. Gently brush using back, forth, and rolling motion along all of the inner tooth surfaces.



Tilt brush vertically behind the front teeth. Make several up & down strokes using the front half of the brush



Place the brush against the biting surface of the teeth & use a gentle back & forth scrubbing motion.



## When do you change the brush?

The brush should be changed once in 3 months or once the bristles get frayed. Some brushes have colour indicators. Once the colour fades it is time to replace the brush.

## Conclusion

More than the frequency of brushing, the method of brushing is very crucial for the maintenance of oral hygiene. Faulty tooth brushing can lead to the loss of tooth substance, and lead to sensitivity. Improper tooth brushing leads to accumulation of plaque which in turn leads to decay of teeth, bad odour, and gum diseases which are detrimental for oral health.