



CHOOSING A TOOTHPASTE AND TOOTHBRUSH

THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR A HEALTHY SMILE

You may not stop and think about your toothpaste and toothbrush choices, yet you use these tools every day. While all the products on the shelf might seem the same, with a little help from your dentist you can determine what is right for you.

SELECTING A TOOTHPASTE

No matter the brand, always select a toothpaste with the American Dental Association (ADA) seal of approval.

Anti-cavity: Almost all the options on the market contain fluoride. Fluoride is as important as brushing in preventing decay for it actively strengthens tooth enamel.

Anti-gingivitis: Do your gums suffer from redness and bleeding? You might have gingivitis, a mild form of gum disease. Anti-gingivitis toothpastes help reduce oral bacteria and can be very effective at stopping this gum condition at its source.¹

Desensitizing: Ever take a sip of hot coffee or a cold beverage and feel a shooting pain? This type of toothpaste might be the key to relief — it helps reduce pain by blocking the tooth's pain signal to the nerve.

Tartar-control: As its name indicates, tartar-control toothpaste helps prevent the buildup of tartar — hardened plaque. While this product is helpful in slowing new buildup on teeth, a professional dental cleaning is the only way to remove existing tartar and the bacteria it harbors.

Whitening: Containing polishing or chemical agents that remove surface stains, this toothpaste is able to help maintain the natural color of your teeth.

SELECTING A TOOTHBRUSH

There is more to your brush than the color!

Bristle firmness: Soft brushes are recommended by dentists for daily use. Unless your dentist advises otherwise, reach for a brush labeled “soft” on the package.

Bristle shape: Are the ends of the bristles blunt or rounded? This is a small detail that can make a world of difference. Rounded bristles are less likely to damage delicate gum tissue.

Bristle surface: The ends of the bristles that touch your teeth can be concave (dip down), convex (round up), flat (straight across) or multilevel (a variety of lengths). For all-around cleaning, flat or multilevel bristles work best.

Handle design: Select what is most comfortable for you. All handles seem to be equally effective when used properly. Large-handled brushes are often easier for children to grip.

Head shape and size: Toothbrushes come in many shapes and sizes. Choose the shape that is the most comfortable for your mouth. If you have a small mouth, opt for a compact brush.

Electric toothbrushes: Electric brushes can be a great option if you have trouble reaching the corners of your mouth.

Remember: Your toothbrush won't last forever. Three months is a typical lifespan, but whenever the bristles start to become bent, it's time to go shopping.

Quick tip: Despite popular opinion, it is actually *less* sanitary to keep your toothbrush covered. Letting the brush air dry between uses prevents the growth of bacteria on the bristles.



FUN FACT:
THE MOST POPULAR TOOTHBRUSH COLOR IS
BLUE.

¹ Talk to your dentist before using a product that fights gum or tooth discomfort. Gum and tooth pain and/or redness can be the sign of a more serious condition. Do not continue the use of over-the-counter oral health remedies for longer than directed by your dentist.

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Choosing the toothpaste and toothbrush that is right for you is only the first step to a proper preventive care routine. Learn more about protecting your oral health with preventive care tips on our SmileWay® Wellness site. (mysmileway.com).

Brushing and flossing is for the whole family! Check out our kids' oral health page: mysmilekids.com.