

Brush Right

How to choose the correct toothbrush and toothpaste for your needs



Day in and day out, you rely on your toothbrush and toothpaste to keep your teeth and gums clean. But do you have the right tools to fight decay?

Toothpaste guide



Always choose a brand that contains fluoride and features the American Dental Association (ADA) seal of approval.

Fluoride: This essential mineral fights cavities by strengthening your enamel, the outermost layer of your teeth.

Anti-gingivitis: Do your gums suffer from redness and bleeding? You might have gingivitis, a mild form of gum disease. Anti-gingivitis toothpastes attack oral bacteria to stop your gum infection at the source.

Desensitizing: If it hurts to sip a hot coffee or icy cold beverage, you may find relief in a toothpaste designed for sensitive teeth. These toothpastes contain ingredients that soothe your nerves. But don't forget to book an appointment with your dentist. Pain or discomfort may be a sign of a more serious problem, such as undetected decay or infection.

Tartar control: Tartar is the heavy buildup of plaque on your teeth. Though it's no substitute for a professional dental cleaning, tartar control toothpaste can help break down tartar using slightly more abrasive ingredients.

Whitening: Containing polishing or chemical agents to remove surface stains, this toothpaste can offer you a brighter smile.

For tips on choosing a toothbrush, turn the page.

Toothbrush guide

There's more to your brush than the color!

Bristle firmness: Soft brushes are recommended by dentists for daily use. Unless your dentist advises otherwise, choose a soft brush to avoid damage to your enamel and gums.

Bristle shape: Are the ends of the bristles blunt or rounded? Go for rounded bristles so you don't harm delicate gum tissue.

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

Handle design: Select the handle that gives you a comfortable grip. Children and seniors may find a large handle easier to hold.

Head shape and size: Make sure the shape and size of your toothbrush head are appropriate for your mouth. If you have a small mouth, opt for a compact brush.

Electric toothbrushes: An electric brush may be a great option if you have trouble reaching the corners of your mouth or need a timer to keep you brushing long enough.

Quick tip: Contrary to popular belief, it is actually less sanitary to keep your toothbrush covered. Letting the brush air dry between uses helps prevent the growth of bacteria and mold between the bristles.

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.

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