

Oral Health advice by Dr Mo

1. How to brush your teeth?	Make sure you clean all the surfaces of all your teeth, which should take about 2 minutes. Remember to brush the inside surfaces, outside surfaces and the chewing surfaces of your teeth. It's important to use fluoride toothpaste, as this helps prevent and control tooth decay.
	A. Children aged up to 3 years • Start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as the first milk tooth breaks through (usually at around 6 months, but it can be earlier or later). • Parents or carers should brush or supervise toothbrushing. • Brush teeth twice daily for about 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste. • Brush last thing at night before bed and on 1 other occasion. • Use children's fluoride toothpaste containing no less than 1,000ppm of fluoride (check label) or family toothpaste containing between 1,350ppm and 1,500ppm fluoride. • Use only a smear of toothpaste. • Make sure children don't eat or lick toothpaste from the tube. 

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	<i>B. Children aged 3 to 6 years</i> • Brush at least twice daily for about 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste. • Brush last thing at night before bed and at least on 1 other occasion. • Brushing should be supervised by a parent or carer. • Use children's fluoride toothpaste containing no less than 1,000ppm of fluoride (check label) or family toothpaste containing between 1,350ppm and 1,500ppm fluoride. • Use only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste. • Spit out after brushing and don't rinse – if you rinse, the fluoride won't work as well. 
	<i>C. Children aged 7 and over</i> • Brush at least twice daily for about 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste. • Brush last thing at night before bed and at least on 1 other occasion. • Use fluoride toothpaste containing between 1,350ppm and 1,500ppm of fluoride (check label). • Spit out after brushing and don't rinse – if you rinse, the fluoride won't work as well. • Children aged 7 and over should be able to brush their own teeth, but it's still a good idea to watch them to make sure they brush properly and for about 2 minutes.

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2. How to use disclosing tablets

- First brush your teeth
- Rub some lip salve or Vaseline onto your lips and around the corners of your mouth (to prevent staining)
- Chew either a half or one whole tablet thoroughly, swish the saliva around in your mouth, then run your tongue over all of the surfaces of your teeth both inside and out



- Spit out the saliva gently and carefully to stop splatter (dye may stain basins and clothing)
- Swish and rinse your mouth out once with water – again spit gently
- Some tablets are two tone and older plaque that has been there for more than 12 hours will appear blue, newer plaque will be pink. Other tablets just stain plaque pink/red
- Look in the mirror to see how well you have brushed
- Staining shows the areas on the teeth that you missed when you brushed
- Brush your teeth again to remove all of the plaque and staining – your tongue will remain blue/pink for a while afterwards
- Repeat again in a few days to see if your brushing has improved
- Disclosing tablets contain vegetable dyes.
- Avoid the use of disclosing products if you have an atopic allergy (sensitivity to allergens) or unstable asthma

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3. How to use mouthwash?	• Using a mouthwash that contains fluoride can help prevent tooth decay, but don't use mouthwash (even a fluoride one) straight after brushing your teeth or it'll wash away the concentrated fluoride in the toothpaste left on your teeth. • Choose a different time to use mouthwash, such as after lunch. • Don't eat or drink for 30 minutes after using a fluoride mouthwash.
4. How to use dental floss?	• Regular flossing may also reduce gum disease and bad breath by removing plaque that forms along the gum line. • It's best to floss before brushing your teeth. • Take 30cm to 45cm of floss or dental tape and grasp it so you have 3cm or 4cm of floss taut between your hands. • Slip the floss or dental tape between the teeth and into the area between your teeth and gums, as far as it'll go. • Floss with 8 to 10 strokes, up and down between each tooth, to dislodge food and plaque. • Flossing isn't just for dislodging food wedged between your teeth.
5. How to use interdental brushes?	• You can use interdental brushes or single-tufted brushes instead of flossing, especially if there are gaps between your teeth. • The brush should fit snugly between the teeth. • Never use toothpicks to remove trapped food from between your teeth as you may damage your gums, which could lead to an infection. • Your dentist or hygienist can advise you on the best way to clean between your teeth.