

ORAL HEALTH MONTH

Dr. Abby Degaust
Ask your dentist

Q: Do I really need to brush my teeth twice a day?

A: Brushing your teeth at least twice a day is one of the most important things you can do for your oral health in addition to flossing and regular dental check ups.

When you eat, leftover food mixes with the saliva and bacteria in your mouth to form plaque. This filmy substance coats your teeth and gums, which puts your teeth and gums in direct contact with bacterial acid and this can lead to tooth decay and gum disease. The longer the acid stays on the teeth the greater the chance of getting a cavity. Twice daily brushing removes the plaque before it can damage your teeth and gums. Brushing twice a day also helps prevent tartar build up. Tartar is calcified plaque and the hardening process takes about a day to occur. Once it is hardened it cannot be removed with brushing and flossing and must be removed professionally by a dental hygienist. Regular brushing can also help prevent bad breath and keep your teeth whiter.

Brushing your teeth is not complicated, but there is a proper technique. You want to use a soft toothbrush with fluoride tooth paste and brush at a 45 degree angle to your teeth. You want to put the bristles where the gum meets the teeth and go in gentle circles. You want to clean every surface of the tooth which includes the cheek side, tongue side and the top of each tooth. And do not forget to brush your tongue. To clean between the teeth, you will need to floss. Brushing your teeth should take two to three minutes. Try timing yourself to make sure you are brushing long enough. Replace your tooth brush every 3 months or sooner if you notice the bristles are getting splayed. If this is happening, you are more than likely brushing too hard and could be causing damage to your gums which can lead to gum recession.

Sources: http://www.cda-adc.ca/en/oral_health/cfyt/dental_care/flossing_brushing.asp
http://www.cda-adc.ca/en/oral_health/complications/diseases/gum_diseases.asp



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