

Removing plaque is important to good dental health.

# 7 STEPS to a clean and healthy mouth



Plaque is a sticky, colorless film of bacteria and sugars that constantly forms on our teeth. It is the main cause of cavities and gum disease. If plaque remains on teeth for 24 to 48 hours, it can harden into tartar that can cause gum disease and possible tooth loss. Once plaque forms into tartar, only your hygienist or dentist can remove it.

## Brush up for a healthier mouth.

Brushing your teeth freshens your breath, gives you a whiter smile, and removes plaque and food particles from your teeth.

1. Angle the bristles next to the outer surface of your teeth toward the gum line.
2. Gently move the brush in a circular motion.
3. Gently scrub all the outer surfaces of the upper and lower teeth, making sure to reach the back teeth.
4. Using the same circular motion, brush the inside surfaces of all your teeth.
5. Scrub the chewing surfaces, especially the grooves that may collect food particles in your back teeth.
6. Use the tip of the toothbrush in a circular motion to clean the front teeth.
7. Finally, gently brush the roof of your mouth, the insides of your cheeks, and your tongue to make your entire mouth feel clean and to freshen your breath.

## Finding the right toothbrush

- Make sure your toothbrush fits your hand comfortably and is shaped so that it reaches all parts of your mouth.
- A soft bristled brush is the most effective because the bristles get down into the spaces where plaque and food particles hide. Soft bristles are also less likely to harm teeth and gums.

## Remember...

- Be sure to brush your teeth at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush gently. The tips of the bristles do the cleaning, so don't squash them.
- Change the position of the brush frequently, moving slowly across all the surfaces of every tooth.
- Floss daily to remove plaque from between your teeth and under your gum line, where your toothbrush may not reach – and where gum disease often begins.

**GO YOU**<sup>SM</sup>



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