

Basics of Oral Health 4

How to Brush

Ask participants: (tell them to just think of the answer, not say it out loud)

- How often do you brush your teeth?
- How much toothpaste do you use?
- When do you think children can start brushing their teeth all by themselves?

There is a right way to brush so that every part of every tooth gets clean.

Use a soft toothbrush and toothpaste—a small smear when the first tooth appears and a pea-sized amount for three and older.

Fluoride in toothpaste helps strengthen teeth.

Everyone should brush at least two times every day—after breakfast and before bed. Bedtime is the most important time to brush so that food does not sit on teeth all night which can cause cavities.

Hold your brush against where the gum meets the tooth. The food and germs stick there.

Use small circles and count to 5 before moving to the next area. Move around in a pattern from tooth to tooth—inside, outside, top and bottom. With children we say: “make tiny, tickly, wiggly, circles” and we count out loud to 5 (*ask children or parents to count to 5 with you*) Do this until every side of every tooth has been cleaned. It usually takes about 2 minutes.

It is not easy for children—parents need to brush until children are 8 years old.

Remember the biting surfaces. Those teeth have bumps and grooves where food gets stuck and germs are hiding.

Remember to brush your tongue too! (*pretend to brush tongue*)

This time (hold up your “pointer” finger) let’s pretend this is your toothbrush. Keep your finger outside of your mouth. Let’s brush and count together—round and round:

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

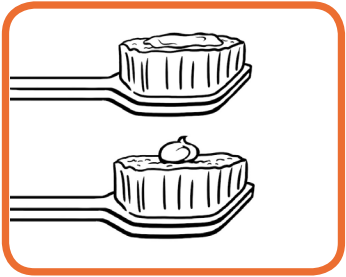
Supplies

- Toothbrush.
- Mouth model.
- “How to Brush”handout.

Discussion and Parent Practice Handout

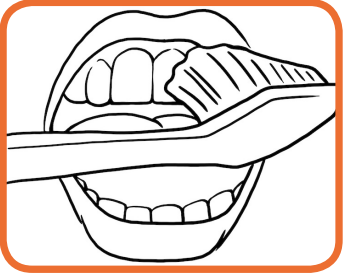
- What questions do you have about toothbrushing?
- This handout has some helpful brushing tips.

How To Brush



Use a soft bristle toothbrush and fluoridated toothpaste.

Use a smear of toothpaste from the first tooth up to age 3, a pea-sized amount after that.



Hold your brush at an angle where the gum meets the tooth.

Food and germs like to stick there.



Move the toothbrush in small circles.

Count to 5 before moving the brush to another spot.



Remember the biting surfaces.

That is where the food gets stuck and germs hide.



Brush the tongue.

Germs hide there.

Brush after breakfast and before bed.

