

Proper Oral Care

Plaque is a transparent film consisting of living bacteria and decomposed food particles that adhere to the teeth. If plaque is not removed thoroughly each day, it may form calculus or tartar. Calculus can only be removed by the dentist or hygienist through scaling procedures. Calculus formation is the main cause of periodontal disease.

An effective home care regimen of controlling plaque is essential. The following will reinforce what was instructed at the office.

BRUSHING

Place a *soft* bristle toothbrush (not a medium or hard bristle) at a 45-degree angle at the junction where the tooth and the gum tissue meet. Move the bristles in a *light circular motion* to clean the tooth as well as massage the gums. The tongue side of the teeth needs to be brushed in the same manner. It may be necessary to place the toothbrush vertically when doing the back side of the front teeth. Use the traditional scrub brush method on the chewing surfaces of the teeth. When concentrating in an area, brush the area ten times then move to the next section, overlapping to ensure an area is not missed. Brush the tongue for fresher breath.

It will take at least five minute to do a thorough job. Remember that a worn out toothbrush cannot clean your teeth properly. Replace your toothbrush every three months.

When first learning this new brushing technique, do not use toothpaste. This allows for better visibility for better visibility of the brushing angle and often the toothpaste gives a false feeling of cleanliness due to the mint taste. Always use fluoride toothpaste to help prevent decay. Anti-tartar toothpaste helps prevent calculus formation above the gum line, but has not shown to decrease the incidence of gingivitis or gum disease.

FLOSSING

Flossing *must* be done daily in order to avoid the accumulation of plaque between the teeth. Periodontal disease usually occurs between the teeth since plaque is not removed in these areas by brushing alone.

Wrap the floss around the ring finger and middle finger of each hand. Place the floss behind the last tooth and clean by using a buffing motion going up and down the surface three to six times. Move to the next area gently gliding the floss in between the teeth so as not to damage the triangular tissue. Wrap the floss like a "C" around the tooth, going beneath the gum lines until resistance is met. As the floss frays or accumulates the debris, use another section. Floss threaders or superfloss may be needed around crowns, bridges or braces.

PROXABRUSH

The Proxabrush is to be used between any teeth where it will fit and behind each last tooth. Place the Proxabrush next to the gum line, between the teeth, and gently insert the brush in an out five times. Be sure to use the brush from the tongue side too. Remember that Proxabrushes *do not* replace flossing.

ORAL IRRIGATION - THE INTERJET

Mouth rinses such as Pendex, Colgate Penogard, Viadent, Listerine, Rembrandt or Choice can be used in conjunction with the Interjet. Place a capful of the solution into the reservoir along with 1.5 inches of warm water. Use a low setting, place the tip at a 90-degree angle to the tooth last and begin moving the tip slowly around each tooth. Hold the Interjet between the teeth for five seconds. Do not direct the waterjet below the gum line as damage may result. Continue until the reservoir is empty.

DISCLOSING TABLETS

Disclosing tablets contain a dye enabling the identification of the transparent plaque. The red dye allows viewing the areas missed after brushing and flossing. Try disclosing tablets at home to monitor your progress.

SENSITIVE TEETH

It is common to have sensitivity following dental treatment. The sensitivity may increase for two to three weeks. It will then subside providing the mouth is kept clean. If sensitive areas are not clean, the sensitivity will remain or worsen. Sensodyne, Denquel or Sensivity Protection Crest Toothpaste may help.

SONICARE

This mechanical toothbrush provides optimal plaque removal for non-flossers. It cleans with tooth-by-tooth precision since its design is similar to the professional polishing instrument. Sonicare has ultra-soft rotary brushes to enhance plaque removal and the massaging of the gums. Use it as instructed and bring it with you to your appointments. We will show you how to get the areas you are missing.