

Orthodontic Department

Keeping your Teeth and Gums Healthy

This leaflet has been written to help you improve how you care for your teeth and gums.

- Tooth brushing is the best way to keep your teeth and gums healthy
- You need to remove all the plaque from all sides of your teeth twice a day.

Which toothbrush should I use?

- **Electric** (not battery) **toothbrushes** are slightly better than normal toothbrushes
- Good electric brushes have a **small round head**, for example the Braun Professional Care 2000® or the Philips Sonic® small headed brush.
- A manual toothbrush should have a **small head and medium bristles**.



How should I brush my teeth?

- Point the **brush towards the gum** and apply light pressure so the bristles go under the gum margins
- Try to brush in the **same order every time**, outside, inside and finally the biting surfaces of your teeth
- Avoid pressing too hard or scrubbing at your gums
- Brushing should take at least **3 minutes**, and should be performed at least **twice a day**, in the morning and last thing at night
- Also **brush your tongue** to remove bacteria and keep your breath fresh
- Change your toothbrush regularly, approximately every three months.



What toothpaste should I use?

- Use a **pea-sized amount** of fluoridated toothpaste unless instructed otherwise
- **Do not rinse** the toothpaste out of your mouth after cleaning with water or mouthwash, just spit out the excess.

Should I use dental floss/tape?

- We recommend **dental tape** to **clean between your teeth** and under your gums
- It should be **used daily**.



How do I use it?

- **Wind** the **tape** loosely around the **middle fingers** of both hands so you have a length of between 20-30mm
- Pull the **tape taut** and **guide** the tape between your teeth
- **Work** the **tape** down **gently**, using a **side to side motion** with your fingers
- Take **care not** to **hurt** your **gum**
- Work around your mouth in an ordered way to cover all the areas between all your teeth.



What about interdental brushes such as TePe®?

- Sometimes these can be used as an **alternative** to dental tape
- Use the **size recommended** by your **dentist** or **hygienist**.



How do I use them?

- Gently **push** the **brush between** your **teeth**, working the brush to clean the area thoroughly
- Work around your mouth in an ordered way
- **Do not** use force as you may damage your gums.

Should I use a mouthwash?

- A **fluoride** daily **mouthwash** (0.05% sodium fluoride) helps **prevent** tooth **decay**
- Should be used at a **different time** to **cleaning** your teeth.



How do I use it?

- **Rinse** the **mouthwash** around your mouth, making sure all surfaces have been well covered for **at least one minute**, then spit the mouthwash out
- **Do not** rinse your mouth out after with water.

What else can I do to keep my teeth healthy?

Drinks -

- **Tap water** is best
- Avoid **fizzy drinks**
- Only have **acidic drinks** (fruit juices, yoghurt drinks, squash and smoothies) **occasionally** at mealtimes, through a straw if possible
- **Do not** add sugar to tea and coffee.

Food -

- Try **not** to **snack** between meals
- **Limit** any **sugary treats** to mealtimes if possible.

Make sure you:

- **Visit your dentist regularly**
- **Report any problems such as bleeding gums, pain of any sort including toothache or other sore spots in your mouth**

Further Information



Download: (on your mobile phone)



Sugar Smart App



Brush DJ App

Contact Numbers:

We hope you have found this information useful, but if you have any questions or are worried about anything, please speak to the Orthodontic team:

Orthodontic Department (Dorset County Hospital): 01305 2551747

Orthodontic Department (University Hospitals Dorset): 0300 019 4694

Useful Websites:

- www.dentalhealth.org (Oral Health Foundation)
- www.nhs.uk/change4life (Change 4 Life)
- www.bsperio.org.uk (British Society of Periodontology)
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If you have feedback regarding the accuracy of the information contained in this leaflet, or if you would like a list of references used to develop this leaflet, please email patientinformation.leaflets@dchft.nhs.uk



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