

CHAIRSIDE GUIDE

CONSENSUS ON TOOTHBRUSHING

Further details of the underpinning evidence informing the recommendations can be found in the publication **'Development of toothbrushing recommendations through professional consensus'**.

Question	Final Recommendation	Strength of Recommendation*
When should you brush your teeth and how often should you brush your teeth?	For adults and children, teeth should be brushed the last thing at night or before bedtime and at least one other time.	● STRONG
	It is recommended for adults and children that toothbrushing should be undertaken/ supported at least twice a day.	● STRONG
How long should you brush your teeth for?	For adults and children, teeth should be brushed for long enough to ensure that all tooth surfaces are cleaned effectively. This may take around two minutes, depending upon the number of teeth present.	● STRONG
When should children start having their teeth brushed?	Parents or carers should commence brushing/cleaning their children's teeth with either a soft toothbrush or cloth as soon as the first tooth erupts. If using a cloth, parents or carers should change to using a toothbrush when the child's molars erupt.	● GOOD PRACTICE
Until what age should children be supervised when brushing their teeth?	Parents or carers should continue to assist or supervise toothbrushing until a child can brush their own teeth effectively.	● STRONG
Should you rinse or spit before/after toothbrushing?	To maintain fluoride concentration levels in the mouth, spit out excess after brushing. Rinsing with water after brushing is not recommended. If a mouthrinse is used, then this should be at a time other than immediately after toothbrushing.	● GOOD PRACTICE
	Young children may need close supervision to ensure excess toothpaste is spat out after brushing.	● GOOD PRACTICE

Should you rinse or spit before/after toothbrushing?	Where manual dexterity may limit brushing technique, rinsing the mouth with water prior to brushing may help dislodge food debris.	● GOOD PRACTICE
	Where a person is unable to spit, use an appropriate amount of toothpaste and assist with clearing any excess from around their mouth after brushing.	● GOOD PRACTICE
What is the most effective type of toothbrush for maintaining oral health (powered or manual)?	Patients should be advised to regularly clean their teeth and gums using either a manual or rechargeable powered toothbrush. The effectiveness of both manual and powered toothbrushes is influenced by user technique.	● STRONG
What is the best toothbrush head type/ shape?	Patients should be advised to use a small toothbrush head with bristles of soft or medium texture, taking into consideration the variation in texture across manufacturers.	● CONDITIONAL
	Patients with physical disabilities may benefit from grip handles or other adaptations (e.g., three sided toothbrushes, powered toothbrushes)	● CONDITIONAL
How effective are interdental cleaning devices for preventing caries?	The choice of interdental cleaning approach may depend on spacing of teeth. Interdental brushes, single-tufted brushes and dental floss are all options for cleaning and should be selected based on interproximal size and effectiveness within the space following professional advice.	● CONDITIONAL
What concentration of fluoride toothpaste is most effective?	Children should use fluoride toothpaste containing at least 1,000 ppm fluoride.	● STRONG
	For those aged 7 years or older use fluoride toothpaste containing 1,000 -1,500 ppm fluoride.	● STRONG
	For those with active caries or who are susceptible to dental caries the prescription and use of a higher fluoride concentration toothpaste (2800 ppm or 5000ppm according to manufacturers' guidance) as part of an overall prevention strategy should be considered (for adults and children above 10 years old). This should be reviewed at routine oral health assessments.	● CONDITIONAL
	For those aged ten years or older and undergoing orthodontic treatment with a fixed appliance consider the prescription of a high fluoride toothpaste throughout the treatment phase.	● CONDITIONAL
	Where sensory sensitivities are a concern, mild flavoured toothpastes may be preferred. For certain groups including those with sensory sensitivities, vulnerable airways, dysphagia and cognitive impairment, low foaming toothpastes may be preferred (e.g sodium lauryl sulphate free).	● GOOD PRACTICE

How should a toothbrush be stored?	The toothbrush should be stored in an upright position after use and allowed to air dry.	● GOOD PRACTICE
	The toothbrush should be rinsed thoroughly after each use to remove any remaining paste and debris.	● GOOD PRACTICE
	Toothbrushes should not be shared between family members.	● GOOD PRACTICE
How often should a toothbrush be replaced?	Toothbrushes should be replaced every three to four months or more often if the bristles are visibly matted or frayed, and immediately after an infection/disease.	● GOOD PRACTICE

* **Strong recommendation:** the task team is confident that the desirable effects of an intervention outweigh its undesirable effects or that the undesirable effects of an intervention outweigh its desirable effects ¹.

Conditional recommendation: the desirable effects probably outweigh the undesirable effects or undesirable effects probably outweigh the desirable effects but appreciable uncertainty exists ¹.

Good practice: Clinical opinion suggests this advice is well established or supported; no robust underpinning research evidence exists. Good practice points may be based on extrapolation from research on related topics and/or clinical consensus, expert opinion, and precedent.

¹ <https://gdt.gradeapro.org/>

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