

# 10 Ways to Save Your Teeth – It's Never Too Late!



**1. Consider an electric toothbrush**

The latest manual toothbrushes are excellent, but that depends on doing it right – making small circular motions with the brush, tackling both jaws, in front and behind the teeth for around two minutes. An electric brush makes it easier to be thorough.

**2.** To clean well and avoid gum disease/bleeding gums you must brush the teeth AND the gums around them. **Brush in small circles along the rows of teeth** – upper and lower, in front and behind- focusing at gum level around all the teeth, spending extra time on the back teeth. That means brushing teeth and the gums around them. If they bleed then that means carry on cleaning for longer! (And visit your hygienist)

**3. Brush your teeth before breakfast and before bed (twice a day),** there is no need to brush your teeth more than this - more is not better. If you need to you can always rinse out with water to freshen-up.

**Do not brush after eating any type of acid food or drink,** as this will thin the enamel on your teeth, and make them sensitive and weaker. The idea of brushing after a meal is inappropriate and of no benefit - your teeth have most plaque (bacteria) on them in the morning, so that is when to brush and clean really well.

**4.** Small, decaying deposits of food and plaque bacteria between the teeth are the major reasons for tooth decay (when combined with sugars), gum disease and **bad breath.**

**So use dental floss or 'interdental' brushes every day;** once a day ideally!

And between all your teeth, not just the ones with food stuck in them. Plaque builds up between the teeth where your brush just won't reach. Use a strip of floss at least 30cm long, place it between your teeth, sliding it down under the gums, scraping it up and down each side of the gum. Everyone hates this extra work, but if you don't do that then your mouth will never be really clean or fresh. With

practice, it shouldn't take long.

**5. Visit your dentist once a year and the hygienist every 6 months.**

The dental hygienist can give your mouth a thorough clean to reach the areas that you don't, cleaning away hardened plaque and tartar around between the teeth and below the gum level, and polish your teeth to remove stains and make them smooth. You will also get any hygiene advice that you need for your mouth.

**6. Use a fluoride toothpaste,** as the fluoride helps to prevent tooth decay.

**7. Avoid fizzy drinks like coca-cola** and cut down on other soft drinks, including fruit juices. Fizzy drinks have a very high sugar and acid content, and tend to strip the enamel from your teeth, advancing the decay process, thinning the enamel, and thus making teeth more sensitive. This is also true of fruit, some teas, cider and wine. Dilute juices half and half - that way they go further.

**8. Avoid sucking sweets on a regular basis.** They remain in your mouth for a long time and are rich in sugar. In fact, avoid all refined sugars as far as

possible - specially the white stuff, which is also fattening. Chewing gum is okay. Chocolate is safer on teeth than sweetsies.

**9. Aging + red wine + coffee** cause discoloured teeth. If you don't like discoloured teeth then consider having them whitened using a home kit or chair side technique for whitening - results are fantastic - it is true that people who have great looking teeth look after them better, naturally to maintain that attractive smile.

**10. Don't smoke** - bad for health and gums and stains your teeth. Cigarettes darken your teeth – with a combination of tar and nicotine, and cause bad breath.

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