

- Teeth**Mind your mouth****Know the tips and tricks to make sure your teeth last a whole lifetime**

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Most people might be shocked to learn they're not cleaning their teeth properly. But, how this could be (considering you've been brushing your teeth for many years and should have the finer points down by now)?



Here are some things to think about:

Brushing often

You should brush your teeth twice a day for at least two minutes.

But did you know you shouldn't leave a gap of more than 12 hours between brushes?

This is because of the rate at which mouth bacteria matures — at around 12 hours old, the bacteria in your mouth starts to damage your teeth and should be removed.

You should also floss at least once a day (preferably at night) and visit your dentist every six months for an examination and professional cleaning.

The right toothbrush

According to an analysis of 56 studies published in 2014 by the international research organisation Cochrane, electric toothbrushes do have an edge over their manual counterparts.

After three months of use, electric toothbrushes were found to reduce dental plaque by 21 per cent and gingivitis by 11 per cent more than manual toothbrushes. Whether you opt for manual or electric, though, you should swap your toothbrush (or its head) every three months.

All-important fluoride

Fluoride reduces the acid produced by bacteria in your mouth and strengthens the enamel of your teeth, which prevents tooth decay. Although fluoride is a mineral found everywhere in nature, including your water and food, your teeth do need more fluoride than can be found naturally.

You should use toothpaste with a fluoride content of at least 1350 to 1500 parts per million (ppm F) for effective protection. The fluoride count of your toothpaste can be found either on the box or tube as one of the ingredients.

It's also important to note that you should not rinse your mouth after brushing — this gets rid of the fluoride — but should merely spit it out, leaving a protective layer behind.