

# Dental Hygiene Basics

Designed and distributed by The New Jersey Self-Advocacy Project, a program of The Arc of New Jersey  
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[www.njselfadvocacyproject.org](http://www.njselfadvocacyproject.org) / 732-749-8514 / NJSAP@ArcNJ.org

## Choose the Right Toothpaste for You

Find a brand and flavor that you enjoy; there are many alternatives to the traditional mint. No matter which version you choose, make sure it contains fluoride. It works by fighting germs that can lead to decay, as well as providing a protective barrier for your teeth.



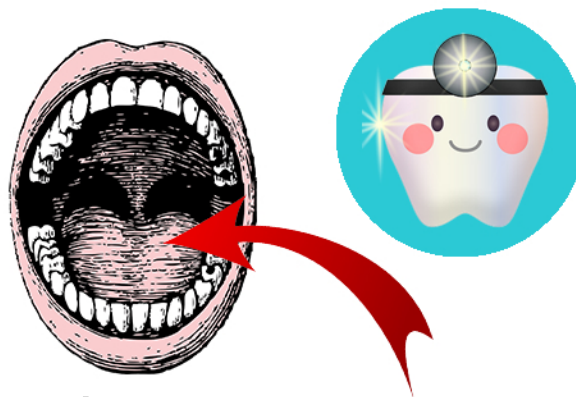
## Brush Properly

The way you brush is important — in fact, doing a poor job of brushing your teeth is almost as bad as not brushing at all. Take your time, moving the toothbrush in gentle, circular motions to remove plaque. Unremoved plaque can harden, leading to buildup and gingivitis (early gum disease).



## See Your Dentist at Least Twice a Year

At minimum, you should see your dentist for cleanings and checkups twice a year. Not only can a dentist remove plaque and look for cavities, but they will also be able to spot potential issues and offer treatment solutions.

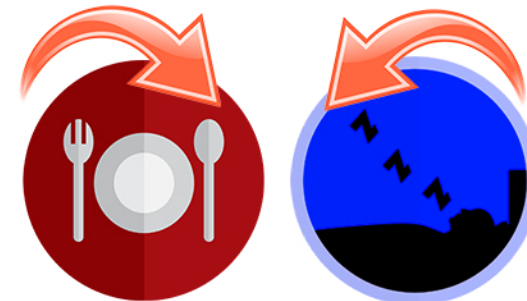


## Don't Neglect Your Tongue

Not brushing your tongue can lead to bad mouth odor and other oral health problems. Gently brush your tongue every time you brush your teeth.

## Limit Sugary and Acidic Food/Drinks

Sugar converts into acid in the mouth, which can then erode the enamel of your teeth and lead to cavities.



## Brush After Meals & Before Bed

Brushing an hour after meals can minimize the growth of bacteria in your mouth. Brushing too soon can cause damage to the enamel of your teeth. Brushing before bed gets rid of the germs and plaque that build up throughout the day.

## Consider Mouthwash

Mouthwash reduces the amount of acid in the mouth, cleans hard-to-brush areas and re-mineralizes the teeth. A mouthwash is particularly helpful if your brushing and flossing skills need some help.



## Don't Forget to Floss

Floss everyday, not just when you feel something stuck in your teeth.

### Source:

<https://totalhealthcare.org/11-ways-to-keep-your-teeth-healthy/>