

# FOR THE DENTAL PATIENT ...

## BASIC ORAL CARE

For most of us, thorough daily oral hygiene lays the groundwork for a healthy smile. Just a simple routine of brushing and flossing, in addition to regular dental check-ups, can be enough in most cases to help prevent tooth decay, gum disease and bad breath.

## BRUSHING UP ON TECHNIQUE

Since there are various techniques for brushing your teeth, it's a good idea to ask your dentist which one to use.

Here are a few tips to help you develop a good brushing routine:

- Brush twice a day.

- Use a fluoride-containing toothpaste to help prevent tooth decay.

- Place your brush at a slight angle toward the gums when brushing along the gum line.

- Use a gentle touch—it doesn't take much pressure to remove the plaque from your teeth, and a vigorous scrubbing could irritate your gums.

- Concentrate on cleaning all the surfaces of the teeth.

- Brushing your tongue gently can help remove bacteria that cause bad breath.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF FLOSSING

Cleaning between your teeth is every bit as important as brushing.

- Since brushing can't effectively clean between teeth, it's important to use floss to get to those areas.



- Other items also are available to help you clean between your teeth. Ask your dentist which ones to use.

- Clean between your teeth once a day.

- As with brushing, use a gentle touch to avoid injuring your gum tissue.

## IT'S YOUR CHOICE

Sometimes just walking down the oral health care aisle in your local drug store is enough to make your head spin. With so many choices, how can you choose which products are best for you?

Here are some quick and easy ways to narrow your selection:

- Look for the ADA Seal of Acceptance—your assurance that products have met ADA standards of safety and effectiveness.

- Ask your dentist to help you select the best products for your needs. Because there are distinctive oral hygiene routines and techniques, some products seem to work better for some individuals than for others. The best

brush or interdental cleaner you can buy is the one you will use regularly and properly.

- Talk to your dentist or dental hygienist about your home care routine and technique—he or she can help you get the job done properly.



## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

There is a wealth of information on dental care at your fingertips. Just go to the American Dental Association's Web site ([www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)) and click on the Patients & Consumers content area for more discussion about dental hygiene, oral health or the ADA Seal of Acceptance.

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