



## Homecare Instructions

### Plaque:

Plaque is constantly forming on our teeth so we must remove it daily so that the bacteria living in the sticky film (plaque) doesn't sit and become more aggressive. When plaque is left alone, it begins to calcify and harden into what we call tarter or calculus. The body has an immune response to the bacteria that lives inside the plaque or calculus and can in turn destroy the supporting tissue and bone around the teeth, causing inflammation, bleeding and bone loss.

It is very important that you know how to keep your teeth and gums clean and healthy so that you are removing bacteria on a daily basis and not letting it sit undisturbed and migrate down under the gums where it is harder to reach.

### Disclosing:

A pink disclosing solution is used to see the plaque on your teeth. This helps you to see where you are missing when you are brushing and flossing.

### Brushing:

Brushing should be done at least twice a day for 2 minutes each time. It is important to only use a soft bristled toothbrush so that you don't cause trauma to your tissue or teeth. When the plaque is newly formed, it is in a soft, sticky state and can therefore be easily removed. You just need to use the proper tools to access it. All the brushes we give you are soft.

Spend at least 30 seconds per quadrant. Start holding your toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to your gum tissue and work along the gum line in small circles. Be sure not to move too quickly because you want to get the bristles under the gums and between the teeth as much as possible. Brush the outside, inside and biting surface of your teeth.

When brushing the tongue side of your teeth, you need to rotate your toothbrush vertically to access the inside the curve. Turning your toothbrush vertically allows the bristles to get close to the tooth and gums.

When brushing the cheek side of the upper teeth, the molars in the back can be hard to reach. To relax the muscle in your cheek, close down halfway and then place your toothbrush on the back side of the very back tooth. Try to wrap it around the back of the last tooth and then start your circular motion. Also brush the surface of your tongue.

We also encourage "dry brushing," which is brushing with no toothpaste. The motion of the toothbrush is what works to remove the plaque layer, not the toothpaste. Toothpaste is beneficial in that it delivers fluoride to your teeth, but it is not necessary to remove the plaque.

**Flossing:**

In addition to brushing, it is important that you floss to access in between your teeth. The toothbrush can't reach everywhere, so it is important to use additional tools so that you are removing as much of the plaque as possible on a daily basis.

The type of floss we recommend is a fine, unwaxed floss so that it can cut through the plaque layer and scrape it off of your tooth surface. The waxed or tape floss can have a coating that glides over the plaque, making it ineffective.

Using string floss is preferred because you have more control over wrapping the floss around the tooth. The "U" shaped flossers are another alternative but aren't as effective.

Use the illustrations on the "How to Floss" guide attached to see how to hold your floss and wrap it around the tooth. Start by wrapping around the floss around your middle fingers. Gently get the floss as far under the tissue as possible and then wrap the floss around the tooth in a "C" shape. Be sure to wrap both on the front side of the tooth as well as the back side. Apply pressure to the tooth and then do a scraping motion away from the gum tissue, repeating this motion 3-4 times or until you no longer see plaque coming off of the floss. In between the same teeth, you want to floss on the other side of the tissue on the neighboring tooth, wrapping the floss the other way and repeating the scraping motion.

When flossing around crowns, make sure you are getting your floss around the crown margin as much as possible since plaque likes to accumulate at the margin.

**Proxy brushes:**

Proxy brushes are helpful to use IN ADDITION to brushing and flossing to access harder to reach areas and clean out the spaces in between your teeth.

The brushes come in different sizes to fit the spaces in between your teeth. You want the brush to be large enough to fit the space comfortably, without traumatizing the tissue. Don't use a very small brush in a big space.

When using a travel proxy brush, you want to place the cap on the end to make a handle and then bend the tip at a 90-degree angle. The brush will go in between your teeth in a back-and-forth motion. Keep the brush horizontal so that it doesn't traumatize the tissue.

**Specialty brushes:**Two-row brush:

- This brush is long and narrow and has two rows of bristles. It is great for dry brushing at the gum line.

End tuft brush:

- This brush has a small tuft of bristles that come to a point. It is great for dry brushing hard to reach areas.

Use whatever brush gives you the best access.