

How To Brush Your Teeth

By Elizabeth A. Butler-Parrish

Brushing teeth. Something that starts as early as 6 months old. Something we have all been taught how to do. A simple part of all of our days. Aaron Haskett from Haskett Orthodontics had something to say when asked about brushing one's teeth, "I recommend it". If the local celebrity and orthodontist says to do it, we do it. When brushing one's teeth, it all starts with the toothpaste. While in the toothpaste aisle of the grocery store Fred Meyer, a worker recommended the Native toothpaste for sensitive teeth. Of course I took the recommendation and am about halfway through the tube. But I know I will be buying Crest next time. Equally important as the toothpaste, is the toothbrush. Last time I was at the dentist, they gave me a small headed toothbrush. I find it is so much better to reach the back teeth. If I had to give everyone one tip about brushing one's teeth, it would be to buy a small head toothbrush. Although, I do hear many good things about electric toothbrushes if that is something one wants to pursue.

Once you have your toothbrush and toothpaste ready, you can begin. Some people choose to put water on their toothbrush and then toothpaste. Perhaps wet it again after. I find wetting it beforehand does nothing, I squeeze my toothpaste on the brush and *then* I wet it. Once you are ready, you can go for it. I start with my lower teeth and go on the outside of one side. Then I do the inside of the same side, making an extra effort on the back teeth. I continue around the bottom teeth until I am finished, this is the process I recommend.. After you repeat the same process on your upper teeth, you can usually do one last lazy run through and rinse. This should all take around two minutes.

Myself and many others were not aware of the final step of brushing one's teeth until the tween years. It's brushing the tongue. I personally have a tongue piercing, so I go a bit overboard on this step and spend more time doing this than my actual teeth. You simply use the remaining toothpaste on your brush. You should start at the back of your tongue and move your way forward. For those with a tongue piercing, grip the ball of it and brush the bar both on the top of your tongue and the bottom. It is very important to remove the bacteria that grows in one's mouth. It is one of my personal fears to have a nasty tongue/tongue ring. Continue with the front section of your mouth until it returns to the natural pink it should be.

After you complete all the tasks required for a successful tooth brushing session, you should rinse your mouth with water. Some people keep a cup in their bathroom to do so, I personally dip my head into the sink to rinse with water. If you want to go a little overkill, you can use mouthwash for this part. Sometimes, if brushing my teeth sounds so horrible, I just use mouthwash.

To quote Hasketts friend from Arkansas, “If you don’t brush your teeth you only have one tooth to brush”. This is the truth, not brushing teeth can lead to tooth decay, gum disease, and so many more health issues. It is a key part of human hygiene and really, self care.