

# PERIODONTAL CARE

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## Home Care Guidelines for Maintaining Healthy Teeth & Gums

These are our recommendations for maintaining healthy teeth and gums. Follow them every single day and the chances of keeping your natural teeth and avoiding additional surgery are very good. Ignore them and any treatment provided will fail. What you do on a daily basis determines the long term health of your gums. As your periodontist, we can help improve your access for cleaning and treat any existing infections. Health is a function of participation. Get involved and get healthy!

### I. Your Personal Responsibilities (know your risks)-

- A. if you are a tobacco user, you know what to do--- QUIT! Ask about Chantix.
- B. if you are diabetic, maintain consistent, normal blood sugar levels
- C. don't exceed the recommended time interval between cleanings
- D. maintain meticulous daily plaque control
- E. if you have gum disease, address it ASAP with laser therapy, root planing, antibiotics or conventional surgery to reduce or eliminate the silent killer, inflammation

### II. Recommended Supplies-

- A. extra wide dental floss (e.g. Dentotape by Johnson & Johnson) or SuperFloss
- B. battery assisted toothbrush (Braun Oral B, Rotodent or Sonicare brands)
- C. Hydrofloss oral irrigator or Water Pik brand
- D. Rx chlorhexidine rinse, Crest ProRinse, Natural Dentist or Listerine products
- E. Rembrandt Plus Toothpaste to minimize staining while using prescription rinses; otherwise, any fluoride containing toothpaste is OK; use desensitizing toothpaste if your teeth are sensitive
- F. topical fluoride gel for cavity protection and/or sensitive teeth

### III. Daily Routine (to be repeated once or twice daily, *properly*, in the following order)-

A. **brushing** (including your tongue): Allow the brush head to do the work. You just move the brush tooth-to-tooth following the same pattern every time so as not to miss any surfaces. Spend 60 seconds on your upper teeth and 60 seconds on the lowers. Light, lateral pressure is all that is needed. The target area to aim for is the junction of the tooth and the gums.

B. **flossing**: Dentotape is a bit harder to get between tight contacts but is much more effective. Bend about 18" of floss into a "C" shape and clean both sides of adjacent teeth and gently under the gums, not just the space between the teeth. Move the floss up and down in a shoe shine motion on the sides of the teeth 6-8 times each, not forgetting the backs of your last teeth. Try Oral-B Satin floss for tight contacts if the extra wide floss won't pass through.

C. **water irrigation**: Use 1.5 cups of warm water with several capfuls of antimicrobial rinse mixed in. With the tip almost in contact with the teeth, lean over the sink and aim the water flow perpendicular to the teeth or slightly under the gum line. Massage the gums with the water pressure. The pressure should feel good but not so hard as to be uncomfortable. Irrigate both the front and back sides of the teeth spending equal time in all areas.

D. **rinse**: Swish with an antimicrobial rinse for about 30 seconds then spit it out. Don't rinse with water, eat or drink for 30 minutes afterwards.