

Tooth Talk

“Hey Doc, what kind of toothbrush should I use? Manual or Electric?”

Nowadays, choosing the right toothbrush can be an overwhelming task! There is a whole variety of different kinds of toothbrushes on the market to choose from. Basically, the purpose of a toothbrush is to remove plaque, stimulate gums and maintain good hygiene. The “effectiveness” of your tooth brushing does not depend solely on the type of toothbrush that you use. Other factors that are important include: the brushing technique, the frequency of brushing, the length of time of brushing, etc.

There are basically two main types of toothbrushes one can select to help maintain good daily oral hygiene: “manual” toothbrush and “electric” toothbrush. Manual toothbrushes require the user to do all the brushing motion. Electric toothbrushes, meanwhile, only require the user to guide the brush along the tooth surface and it will vibrate, pulsate, oscillate, getting to the hard-to-reach areas. The following is brief comparison of the “advantages” of those 2 types of toothbrushes:

MANUAL TOOTHBRUSHES

- portable
- inexpensive
- some come with gum stimulators
- some come with tongue-cleaner
- criss-crossed, extra-long or multi-level bristles
- textured bristles

ELECTRIC TOOTHBRUSHES

- pressure sensors to signal when brushing too hard
- oscillating-rotating or sonic technology
- timers to keep track of the length of time of brushing
- digital reminders for the brush head replacement pads
- multiple brush-head compatibility so one can experience multi-level bristles
- different kinds of bristle design

Researches have shown there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of toothbrushing between manual and electric toothbrushes. The decision on choosing the right kind of toothbrush really depends on each person’s preference, needs and motor capabilities.

For those with mental or physical disabilities, or who require caregivers to provide oral hygiene, or who are lazy brushers not brushing long enough or frequently enough, electric toothbrushes may be the better choice.

Whether you prefer manual or electric toothbrushes, you should follow the recommendations below for effective oral hygiene care.

1. Manual toothbrushes or electric brush-heads should be replaced every 3 months or when the bristles are not firm and straight.
2. The recommended brushing time is 2 minutes, 2 to 3 times a day.
3. Use smaller heads so that they can reach more areas of the teeth and gums for better plaque removal.
4. Plaque accumulates everywhere in the mouth. Therefore don’t forget to clean your whole mouth, including your tongue and other oral tissue.

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