
GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PREVENTION OF PERIODONTAL DISEASES

PATIENT/PUBLIC GUIDANCE

These guidelines are the product of the XI European Workshop in Periodontology (the 'Prevention Workshop'), which took place in November 2014 in La Granja de San Ildefonso (Segovia), Spain. For further information, please see the Prevention Workshop website (prevention.efp.org). The full proceedings of the workshop were published in April 2015 in the Journal of Clinical Periodontology and can be downloaded (in pdf format) free of charge from: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpe.2015.42.issue-S16/issuetoc>. In addition, a podcast is available for viewing (at <http://efp.stream-congress.com>) in which the four co-chairmen of the Prevention Workshop discuss its conclusions and guidelines.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PREVENTION OF PERIODONTAL DISEASES PREVENTION OF PERIODONTITIS

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BLEEDING GUMS ARE NOT A NATURAL SIGN AND GENERALLY INDICATE POOR GUM HEALTH. THIS MAY MANIFEST AS BLOOD IN YOUR SALIVA WHEN BRUSHING TEETH AND CAN INDICATE GINGIVITIS, WHICH IS REVERSIBLE WITH ADVICE AND ACTION. HOWEVER, IT MAY INDICATE A DEEP-SEATED PROBLEM CALLED PERIODONTITIS, WHICH CAN CAUSE TOOTH LOSS AND AFFECT YOUR GENERAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING. VISIT YOUR DENTIST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE FOR A DIAGNOSIS AND ADVICE. IT IS YOUR CHOICE WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT, BUT GUM DISEASE IS PREVENTABLE AND TREATMENT IS GENERALLY EFFECTIVE, RESULTING IN TEETH FOR LIFE, INCLUDING GREATER CONFIDENCE, SELF-ESTEEM AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

- The most effective thing you can do to prevent gingivitis and periodontitis is to remove the bacterial plaque from your teeth by brushing. Your dental team will demonstrate specific techniques. Their professional guidance is vital, just “brushing” may not work.
- Manual and power (electric) tooth brushes are both effective, but rechargeable power brushes (NOT battery-powered brushes) are slightly better. Your dental team will advise you which to use, but remember that both types are effective.
- Generally, small-headed brushes with medium bristles are advised, however we don’t know yet if one design is significantly better than another.
- You should brush twice a day: ideally before breakfast (and after if you wish to remove food from your teeth) and before bed-time, but allow about 30 minutes after you eat.
- If your gums are healthy and you wish to prevent the onset of gingivitis, then 2 minutes brushing is advisable; however if you have gum disease this will be insufficient time.

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- Daily cleaning between your teeth using special “interdental” brushes is essential for treating and preventing gum disease. Floss is of little value unless the spaces between your teeth are too tight for the interdental brushes to fit without hurting or causing harm.
- Your dental hygienist or dentist will advise you on the correct interdental brush type and size, and it is likely that you will need several sizes to clean your entire mouth.
- It is vital that you are shown how to use the interdental brushes in your own mouth and that you can demonstrate this to the hygienist to ensure your technique is correct.
- Mouth rinses do offer additional benefit to tooth brushing in the management of gingivitis, however they are NOT a substitute for physically removing the plaque or for the amount of time you spend toothbrushing. Their use between brushing may help.
- It is important that your hygienist or dentist stains your teeth every recall visit to identify areas you may be missing and help you target these better. This reinforcement helps.