

When Should I Change My Child's Toothbrush?

Practicing proper oral hygiene includes taking care of your toothbrush and replacing it when necessary. The importance of keeping the toothbrush your child places in his or her mouth every day fresh and clean can be easily overlooked, as teaching kids to brush their teeth properly may become the primary focus for parents. Paying attention to these details however is crucial to dental health, and parents should be especially mindful of professional recommendations regarding toothbrush care and replacement.

Toothbrush Care



Time to Replace Your Toothbrush

New Toothbrushes

To keep kids and their toothbrushes healthy, make sure the toothbrush dries out between each use. Bacteria and other germs can thrive on surfaces like the head of a toothbrush, and over time, these bacteria can accumulate to noteworthy levels. To prevent this and keep your child's toothbrush as clean and germ free as possible, shake the toothbrush vehemently under the faucet water after brushing, and then store it in an upright position in order for it to dry out as much as possible between uses. Buying a toothbrush

holder with individual spots to hold multiple brushes is a good idea and a health increasing investment.

To keep sicknesses from spreading between family members, make sure toothbrushes are stored in a way that they will not touch each other. For those who are extremely meticulous about germ control, toothbrushes can even be soaked in mouthwash, which can be used as an antiseptic, every so often.

When To Replace A Toothbrush

Toothbrushes do not last forever and in fact, must be replaced quite often to practice optimum oral hygiene and dental care. The American Dental Association recommends a toothbrush be replaced every 3 months, having more to do with the attrition to the bristles rather than the build up of bacteria and germs. After 3 months of wear and tear to the bristles, the amount of plaque able to be removed from the teeth and gums significantly decreases and brushing becomes less powerful in maintaining dental health.

Ultimately, as the bristles wear down over time, they are no longer able to reach and remove bacteria from the difficult to reach places, like the corners and between the teeth.

In general, children's toothbrushes typically need replacement more quickly than adults'. Three months is a general recommendation, but for some people, those who brush harder or with more force for example, toothbrushes may need replacement more frequently. The dictating factor is not necessarily time, but the shape of the bristles.

Overall, it is recommended for parents to pay attention to how worn a child's toothbrush looks, and as soon as the bristles begin spouting in different directions, the brush should be interchanged with a new one.

It is also a good idea to change a child's toothbrush after they have been sick with an illness such as the flu, a cold virus, sore throat, or any kind of mouth infection. After using a toothbrush while sick, bacteria and germs pertaining to the illness can hide and thrive in the bristles of the brush, enabling the actual toothbrush to potentially re-infect the child and cause he or she to become sick again.

Toothbrushes and Traveling

When traveling, toothbrushes often become damaged or flattened in a person's travel kit or bag, because they get squashed up against other products or items. To keep toothbrushes clean and the bristles from becoming damaged while traveling, it is a good idea to pack a toothbrush in a protective plastic toothbrush case. Make sure to let the toothbrush dry after brushing, however, before putting it back away in the case.

Tips For Remembering To Replace A Toothbrush

Certain types of toothbrushes are made with bristles that change colors when they wear down, serving as an obvious indication that the brush head has become less effective and it is time for a replacement.

In general, an easy way to remember to replace a toothbrush is to get in the habit of buying a new brush every time the child visits the dentist for their 6 month check up/cleaning and then again half way between their last appointment and their next.