



THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER TOOTHBRUSH SELECTION AND USE IN ORAL HYGIENE

Manzura Kholmurodova

Alfraganus University Faculty of Dentistry and
Pharmacy First-year student of the Dentistry program

Lecturer at the Department of Dentistry,

Irodakhon Akbarovna Akhtamova

Alfraganus University

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Abstract: This article discusses the importance of toothbrushes in maintaining oral hygiene, the criteria for proper toothbrush selection, and the correct methods of use. A toothbrush is one of the main tools for mechanically removing soft dental plaque and food debris from tooth surfaces. The type of toothbrush, bristle hardness, head size, and brushing technique can influence the effectiveness of oral hygiene. Properly selected and regularly used toothbrushes contribute to maintaining good oral hygiene and supporting oral health.

Keywords: oral hygiene, toothbrush, dental plaque, teeth, hygiene, tooth brushing, dental prevention.

The oral cavity is an important part of the human body, and its hygienic condition is closely associated with overall health. During the day, a soft dental biofilm consisting of food debris, bacteria, and their metabolic products can accumulate on tooth surfaces. Failure to remove this biofilm regularly may create unfavorable conditions in the oral cavity. A toothbrush is the most commonly used tool for maintaining oral hygiene. However, simply using a toothbrush is not sufficient. Selecting an appropriate toothbrush, choosing the correct size and type, using an effective brushing technique, and following proper hygiene rules are all important factors.

A conventional toothbrush consists of three main parts: handle, head, bristles. The handle allows the toothbrush to be held comfortably and controlled during brushing. The size of the toothbrush head is also important because it determines how easily different areas of the mouth can be reached. A toothbrush with a very large head may make it difficult to clean certain areas, particularly the posterior teeth.



Toothbrush bristles are generally made of synthetic materials. Their shape, length, and hardness can affect the effectiveness and comfort of brushing. Several factors should be

considered when selecting a toothbrush. First, the size of the toothbrush head should be appropriate for the individual's oral cavity. A smaller head may make it easier to reach posterior teeth and other difficult-to-access areas. Second, bristle hardness is important. For everyday use, soft or medium-soft bristles are generally suitable for many individuals. Excessive use of very hard bristles with strong pressure may increase mechanical irritation of the gingival tissues. Third, the toothbrush handle should be comfortable to hold and should allow the user to control the brushing movements effectively. Electric toothbrushes can also be effective tools for mechanical plaque removal. Some models have additional functions, such as pressure sensors and timers, which may help users improve their brushing technique. The main goal of toothbrushing is to clean all tooth surfaces as thoroughly as possible. The toothbrush should be positioned close to the gingival margin and moved gently without applying excessive pressure. Particular attention should be given to the outer, inner, and chewing surfaces of the teeth. The chewing surfaces of posterior teeth may especially accumulate food debris and dental biofilm. Excessive force should be avoided during brushing. Applying too much pressure does not necessarily improve cleaning effectiveness and may instead cause mechanical irritation or damage to the gingival tissues and tooth surfaces. Regular toothbrushing is essential for maintaining oral hygiene. Brushing the teeth twice a day, particularly in the morning and before bedtime, is generally recommended. A toothbrush becomes less effective over time. When the bristles become deformed, worn, or spread apart, the toothbrush may no longer clean tooth surfaces effectively. Therefore, toothbrushes should be replaced regularly. Replacing the toothbrush after an illness may also be appropriate from a hygiene perspective.

Children's toothbrushes should be appropriate for their age and oral cavity size. Toothbrushes with small heads, soft bristles, and comfortable handles are generally suitable. Parents or dental professionals can demonstrate proper toothbrushing techniques to children. In young children, adult supervision of toothbrushing is particularly important. After use, the toothbrush should be thoroughly rinsed with water and stored in an open position so that it can dry properly. Keeping a wet toothbrush in a closed container for a long period may prevent adequate drying. Each family member should also have an individual toothbrush. Sharing toothbrushes is not considered hygienically appropriate.

Conclusion:

Proper toothbrush selection and appropriate use are important components of maintaining oral hygiene. Attention should be given to the toothbrush head size, bristle softness, handle comfort, and brushing technique. Regular and correct toothbrushing helps control dental biofilm and contributes to maintaining oral health. Thus, although toothbrushing is a simple daily habit, selecting the appropriate toothbrush and using it correctly are important aspects of preventive dentistry.

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