

# What is The Bait in The Debate?

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Right now in the world outside, there is a metamorphic war going on in the market concerned with oral hygiene aids. There are many companies in the field, each one with its own ways and tactics trying to lure the consumers and the dentists who recommend them. Today, toothpastes and toothbrushes are not merely marketed as oral hygiene Aids but under various names headings :- anti-caries, gum health and plaque control which is nothing but a marketing tact. This paper goes to highlight the effects of oral hygiene aids. Its an attempt to discuss the pros and cons in this constantly evolving world of newer products. As we all know, we are now in 21st century, so there can be no better time than this to reflect on the evolution and the heights dentistry has reached today and spare a few moments to ponder on the common tool used by one and all and what we stand to gain at large.

The recent marketing boom and subsequent proliferation of specialty oral hygiene aids has caused quite a bit of confusion amongst patients, not to mention clogged supermarket shelves everywhere. Among today's plaque busting artillery is an assortment of toothbrushes (powered and manual) as well as toothpastes, floss, interdental cleaners, oral irrigators and more! When buying oral care products, which one do you know is right for you? Even savvy shoppers are sometimes baffled by the seemingly endless variety of oral health care products. Realistically, the diseases are kept at bay by personal and professional oral hygiene, in spite of a pathogenic lifestyle and numerous iatrogenic factors. Let us reflect on the history of oral hygiene aids, lest we repeat the past folly.

## History of Oral Hygiene Aids!

Egyptians were perhaps the first to practice good oral hygiene over 5,000 years ago, using a primitive form of toothbrush. Most often these oral hygiene aids and the method of use were linked to beliefs concerning disease prevention and factors like importance of having white teeth. According to many, white teeth are the first requirements of beauty. In the bible, when Jacob blessed his children, he promised Judah teeth whiter than milk. When nature did not live up to expectations, help was elicited from chew sticks and fiber sticks as natural

toothbrushes and a wide range of dentifrice ingredients including ground animal bones (often burn to produce charcoal), eggshells, chalk as abrasives admixed with honey, salt, ammonia (as a component of urine). As for a toothbrush, there were different types made from either attaching hair from tail of a cow or a horse's mane to a piece of bone. Hippocrates even prepared a dentifrice preparation by burning heads of 1 hare and three mice after taking intestines out of two of them. Thought the 'Miswak' or 'Siwak' have been used with toothpowders and extract of roses, it is most commonly used a single or sole cleansing agent, used as a toothbrush and toothpaste.

## Toothbrushes

Oscillating heads, raised bristles, handles that change colors, you name it they've made it. But it's not so much that the brush that matters as how you use it! Bristles with rounded ends are generally less abrasive to gums. But, the choice of which brush to buy remains highly individual and is often decided on the basis of look and feel.

According to the ADA "It's not the brush, it's the brusher that makes a difference." You should brush correctly and thoroughly! Different brushing techniques have been developed to remove plaque in patients with varying oral conditions. The main thing to remember when brushing, regardless of your technique is to take your time. Patients are often far too aggressive with their toothbrushes. Considering the available information on monitored tooth-brushing time, it can be suggested that people think they brush longer than they actually do. Brushing at mock speed for 10 seconds before you go to bed is great for the biceps but bad for the teeth!! You run the risk of gum recession and tooth abrasion. And, of course, keeping the toothbrush in your mouth for 15 minutes and reading newspaper is not considered brushing!

## Powered Vs Manual

In general, powered brushes offer the most benefit to patients who have very crowded teeth, who have difficulty in manual dexterity, and/or who simply prefer the latest technology. When considering the powered

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brushes, compare the head size of different brands. Smaller head sizes allow you to access hard to reach areas.

### **Sonic Toothbrushes**

With this new technology, sonic waves are used to remove plaque and bacteria. Through the motion of sound waves these toothbrushes are able to sweep away plaque in hard to reach places, between teeth, and to some degree below the gum line. Though they tend to be little on the expensive side, they are more effective at removing stains than other toothbrush alternatives.

### **Toothpastes**

We all know the Basics- brushing with toothpastes helps remove plaque-a sticky, harmful film of bacteria and food debris that grows on your teeth and leads to decay and other bad things. But which toothpaste is the best? Or, do we just need a tube of everything? It has not been enough for a dentifrice to prevent tooth decay or create a smile that will win the man, women or job of one's dream. Now, it seems, a dentifrice must fight tartar, plaque and gum disease as well. And manufacturers do not want to forget "niche" consumers - smokers, natural product fans, people with tooth sensitivity and those with dry mouth. Increasingly intrusive has been a growing demand not just for stain removal and tooth brightening but for actual whitening of the tooth color.

### **Which Brand Is The Best?**

As long as your toothpaste contains flouride, it simply doesn't matter!! Whether you use a gel, paste or even powder, as long as it contains flouride it will effectively fight plaque and cavities.

### **Toothpastes Vs Gels**

It's simply a matter of personal preference. The only difference between gels and pastes is in their packaging and their flavor. Many people purchase gels under the false assumption that they are less abrasive. When actually, gels can be more abrasive due to their higher silica (sand) concentration.

### **How Much Should I Use?**

Contrary to what you have seen on commercials, you don't need to load your entire brush with toothpaste and make that nice little swirl at the end. The amount of past or gel needed for effective cleaning is a pea-sized dab on the top half of your brush. Children under six however should only be given half this amount.

### **It's Enough To Just Brush, Right?**

Nope. Although brushing thoroughly after each meal helps, flossing your teeth everyday to remove plaque and food particles between the teeth and the gum line is just as important. Dentists recommend that you floss at least once a day.

### **Whitening Toothpastes**

Virtually all toothpastes can claim stain removal and tooth brightening. Stain removal is inherent in any dentifrice containing an abrasive and detergent and by using a properly directed toothbrush with sufficient contact time.

### **Smoker's Toothpastes**

These types of toothpastes are generally not recommended because of their potential of causing gum recession and tooth abrasion. The most effective way to beat smoking stains is to stop smoking. But, in the mean time, professional cleanings will offer you the greatest results.

### **Desensitizing Toothpastes**

Generally, they are needed when the patient has some degree of gum recession. Exposed root surfaces can be very sensitive to temperature, touch or sweet.

### **Gum Care Toothpastes**

Gum care toothpastes are a mixed bag. Instead of the usual sodium fluoride found in most brands of toothpastes, this new type contains stannous fluoride. If you have gingivitis, these may offer you a slight advantage over their conventional counterparts.

### **Baking Soda Toothpastes**

If you enjoy using this variety, great! The only problem with these is that many of them contain peroxides, which are irritating to the gums and oral tissues.

### **The Bottomline**

Researchers claim that brushing with the toothpaste of your choice (as long as it contains fluoride) for at least 2 minutes twice a day using a soft bristled toothbrush is good enough. The majority of people only brush their teeth for only 15-20 seconds once a day. Proper brushing technique is far more important than the brand or type of toothpaste used. Flossing at least once a day is strongly recommended. It removes food debris and plaque from between teeth where your brush simply can't reach. So we as dental health professionals should take care to educate people to make the right choice instead of getting caught in the bait.... So now can you guess the bait in the debate??

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