



### **Daily Home Care Instructions**

Regular brushing and flossing, along with a well-balanced diet, will help you maintain your oral health and prevent dental disease.

#### **A basic daily routine includes:**

**Each morning:** When you wake up, brush your teeth using a small amount of toothpaste and a *soft* toothbrush. Begin by brushing the chewing surfaces of the teeth and tongue, and follow by brushing the inside and outside surfaces of the teeth.

Position your toothbrush at a 45° angle, with the bristles pointing at the gum line, and brush in short, semi-circular strokes towards the biting surface of the tooth, allowing the bristles of the toothbrush to slide between the tooth and gum. Spend at least two minutes on the top teeth, and two minutes on the lower teeth. Many of our patients use a battery-powered toothbrush to help take the guesswork out of brushing.

**Lunch:** Brushing after lunch is a great way to freshen up and it helps reduce bacteria levels in the mouth. If you don't have time to brush, drink water and chew sugarless gum.

**Before Bed:** It is especially important to thoroughly clean your teeth and gums prior to going to bed; during sleep the body processes slow down, including the flow of saliva throughout the mouth. This makes the mouth a haven for harmful bacteria to grow and spread.

- ◆ **Floss First.** Wind dental floss around your middle fingers and control it with your index fingers. (You may find that you have better control by holding the floss differently; how you hold it does not matter as long as you can use it effectively.) Wrap the floss around in a C-shape around the tooth, and floss up and down, gently guiding the floss between the gum and the tooth. Repeat for each tooth, frequently winding the floss on your fingers to a fresh section.
- ◆ Floss should not stick or shred, if you have trouble with this, try waxed floss or check with your dentist to make sure that you do not have any broken dental restorations or tooth decay.
- ◆ **Brush for five minutes.** Repeat your morning routine. Don't forget to brush your tongue – typically gentle, back-to-front strokes are the most comfortable.
- ◆ **Rinse with an antiseptic mouthwash.** Swish vigorously with a solution of half mouthwash, half warm water. Use fluoride rinses only if recommended by your dentist.

**Kids Should Brush & Floss too!** Introduce your child to a home care routine upon the appearance of the first tooth. For children too young to brush on their own, use a small soft-bristled toothbrush moistened with water to clean tooth surfaces. Generally, you should floss children's teeth beginning at age four. By age eight, they should have enough manual dexterity to brush and floss on their own.

There are a number of dental aids that can help in challenging areas; such as floss threaders for bridgework, or floss holders for hard-to-reach areas; these are usually available in your local pharmacy. We welcome your questions and invite you to call for us for tips. We want you to have the healthy smile you deserve!