SIKKA DENTAL CORP.
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

A GIFT FOR YOUR SMILE

My Daily Oral Health & Smile Care Guide

Simple steps for a healthy smile, every day.



Dr. Nidhi D. Sikka, DDS
Sikka Dental



Brush 2 times a day

Clean between teeth

Ask us for help

For patients, families and caregivers — because every smile deserves care.

(408) 259-1280
sikkadds.com

WELCOME

A note from Dr. Sikka



Dr. Nidhi D. Sikka, DDS
Sikka Dental, San Jose

Dear friends,

Thank you for visiting us. Taking care of your teeth at home is one of the best gifts you can give yourself.

You do not have to do everything perfectly. Every small step matters. A few minutes each morning and night can keep your smile healthy and comfortable.

Some people brush on their own. Some need a reminder. Some need a helping hand. All of that is okay. If brushing is hard, ask your family or caregiver for help — and ask us, too.

We are here to help you.

With care,
Dr. Nidhi D. Sikka
and the Sikka Dental team

Inside this guide

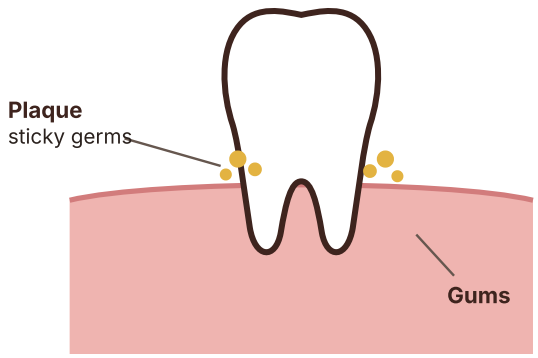
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This guide shares general tips. Your dentist may give you your own plan. **Always follow your personal dental care plan.**

THE BASICS

Why should I take care of my teeth?

Healthy teeth and gums help you eat, talk, smile and feel comfortable every day.



Plaque likes to hide where the tooth meets the gum.

What is plaque?

Plaque is a sticky layer of germs. It grows on your teeth every day. Brushing and cleaning between your teeth wash it away.

What is a cavity?

Germs in plaque use sugar to make acid. Acid can make a small hole in a tooth. This hole is called a cavity. Cavities can hurt and need a filling.



Gums need care too

If plaque stays on the gums, they can get red, puffy and bleed. Gentle daily brushing helps them heal.



Brushing protects

Brushing every morning and night removes plaque before it can cause trouble.



Checkups help

At your visits, we find small problems early — before they hurt. We also clean off hard plaque (called tartar) that a toothbrush cannot remove.

A healthy mouth is part of a healthy life.

EVERY DAY

My morning and night routine

Brush **2 times a day**, for **2 minutes**, with **fluoride toothpaste**. Clean between your teeth **once a day**, if your dentist recommends it.

Morning

- **Brush** my teeth
- **Clean** my tongue gently
- **Clean** dentures or appliances, if I have them
- **Drink** some water

Night

- **Clean between** my teeth
- **Brush** my teeth — the most important brush of the day
- **Clean** dentures or appliances
- **Use** any rinse or product my dentist gave me

2×
every day: morning and night

2 min
each time — use a timer or a favorite song

3–4
months: get a new toothbrush, or sooner if bristles are bent

Do you wear dentures?

Take them out and rinse after eating. Brush them every day with a soft brush and a denture cleaner. Never use hot water — it can bend them out of shape. Keep them moist when they are out, and follow your dentist's advice about night-time.

Every day matters more than perfect. If the full routine feels like too much, start with one good brushing and build from there.

STEP BY STEP

How to brush my teeth

Gentle, small movements clean best. Brushing hard can hurt your gums.

1



Pick a soft toothbrush.

Soft bristles are gentle on gums.

2



Add fluoride toothpaste.

A pea-sized amount for most adults, or what your dentist suggests.

3



Brush the outside.

Tilt the brush toward the gums. Use small, gentle circles.

4



Brush the inside.

Tip the brush up and down behind the front teeth.

5



Brush the chewing surfaces.

The flat tops of your back teeth.

6



Gently brush your tongue.

From back to front. It freshens your breath.

7



Brush for 2 minutes.

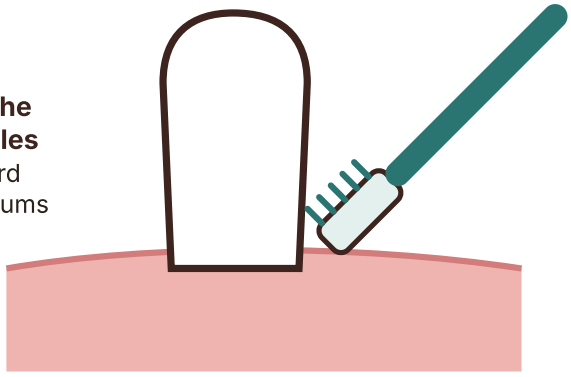
About 30 seconds for each part of your mouth.

8



Spit out the extra.

Do not rinse right away, unless your dentist advises otherwise.



If spitting or swallowing is hard

Ask your dentist how much toothpaste is right for you. Your dentist may suggest a very small amount, and gently wiping away the extra with a soft, clean cloth. Keep the head upright or tipped slightly forward — not tipped back.

CHOOSING TOOLS

Which toothbrush is right for me?

The best toothbrush is **soft**, fits your mouth, and feels comfortable in your hand — or in your helper's hand.



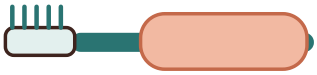
Manual toothbrush

Simple and easy to find. Choose soft bristles.



Electric toothbrush

Does the small movements for you. Many have a 2-minute timer.



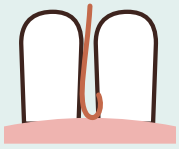
Easy-grip handle

A wider handle or foam grip is easier to hold.

Hard to hold a toothbrush? Some people find an electric toothbrush or a wider handle easier. Others do not like the buzzing. Try what feels right, and ask us for ideas.

How to clean between my teeth

A toothbrush cannot reach between your teeth. Cleaning there once a day removes hidden plaque and food.



Floss

Curve it around each tooth like a "C".



Floss holder

A handle that holds the floss — easier with one hand.



Small brush

A tiny brush (interdental brush) for gaps.



Water flosser

Sprays water between teeth.

Not sure which one? Our dental team can help you choose the right tool for your teeth and your hands.

Be gentle. Never force floss or a brush into a tight space. If it hurts, stop and tell us.

FOR FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS

When I need help brushing

Many people brush on their own. Some need a reminder or a helping hand. **Do as much as you can yourself** — and let someone you trust help with the rest.

I DO IT MYSELF	I NEED A REMINDER	I NEED SOME HELP	A HELPER BRUSHES
I brush and clean on my own.	Someone reminds me or checks.	I do some steps; a helper does others.	My caregiver brushes for me.

Tips for helpers

1. **Sit or stand comfortably and safely.** Good light helps.
2. **Explain each step** before you do it.
3. **Use short words:** “Open, please.” “Top teeth now.”
4. **Allow extra time.** Choose a calm moment.
5. **Let the person do what they can** — even holding the brush.
6. **Be patient** with sensitivity to touch, taste or sound.



Sit the person upright. In a wheelchair, lock the wheels first.

Please never

- Force the mouth open
- Hold the person down
- Put fingers between the teeth
- Tip the head far back

If brushing is too hard

Stop, and try again later. If it keeps being hard, **call us**. We can help you find tools, positions and ideas that work for your loved one.

CALM AND COMFORTABLE

How to make brushing easier

Sounds, tastes and touch can make brushing feel like a lot. Go slowly. Small steps build comfort over time.

Start slowly

- Let the person hold and explore the toothbrush first.
- Start with a few seconds. Add a little more time each day.

Find the right fit

- Try a smaller or extra-soft brush.
- Try mild flavors, or a small amount of toothpaste if foam is upsetting.

Keep it the same

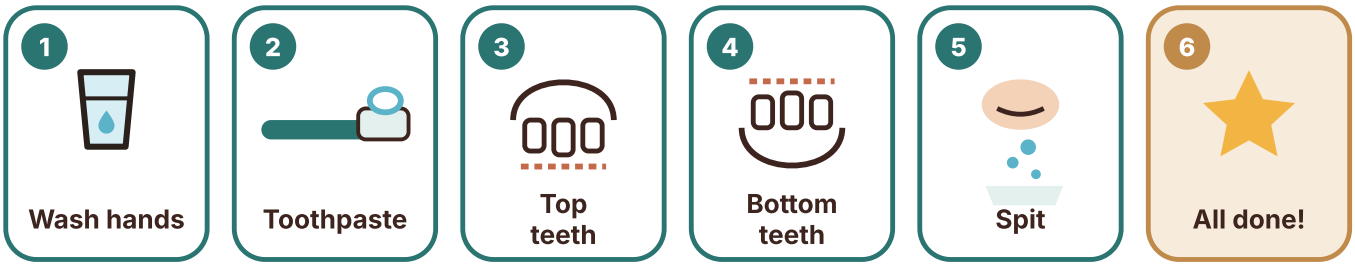
- Same time, same place, same steps.
- Use the picture schedule below.

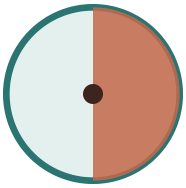
Cheer them on

- Praise every try.
- Use a favorite song, a sticker or a fun reward.

My brushing picture schedule

Point to each picture as you go.





Use a timer you can see. A sand timer or a color timer shows when brushing will end. Knowing the end is near can make brushing calmer.

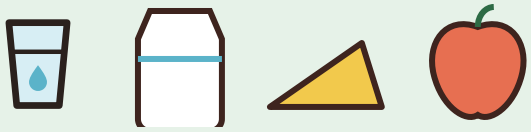
Tell us what helps your loved one feel calm. We can use the same ideas at dental visits.

EAT, DRINK, SMILE

Food, drink and healthy habits

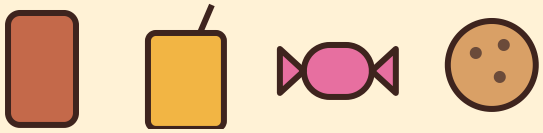
It is not just *how much* sugar — it is *how often*. Every sugary snack or sip gives germs a new chance to make acid.

Great everyday choices



- **Drink water** regularly throughout the day
- Milk, cheese and plain yogurt
- Vegetables, fruit and balanced meals

Try to have less often



- Sipping soda or juice all day
- Sticky candy and frequent sweet snacks
- Sweet drinks after the night brush — water is best

Does your mouth feel dry?

Spit (saliva) helps protect your teeth. A mouth that is often dry is more likely to get cavities. Dry mouth is **not** a normal part of getting older.

Many medicines can cause dry mouth. **Tell your dentist and doctor** if your mouth often feels dry. Sip water often. **Do not stop or change a medicine** without talking to your doctor first.

Special diets come first

If you have a special diet, thickened drinks or tube feeding, keep following your medical team's instructions. Ask us how to protect your teeth along with it.

Liquid medicines

Some contain sugar. Ask your pharmacist about sugar-free choices.

KNOW THE SIGNS

When should I call my dentist?

Call us if you notice any of these signs. The sooner we see a problem, the easier it is to fix.



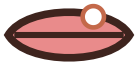
Tooth pain



Bleeding gums



Swelling



Mouth sores that do not heal



Broken tooth, filling or denture



Trouble eating or chewing



Changes in behavior



Loose teeth or new spots on teeth

Some people cannot say that their mouth hurts. Watch for refusing food, rubbing the face, trouble sleeping, crying, or not wanting to brush. These can be signs of mouth pain.

Call us soon

For tooth pain, bleeding or swollen gums, a broken tooth or denture, sores that last more than about 2 weeks, or trouble eating.

Call us the same day

For bad pain, gum or face swelling, or a tooth that is knocked out or badly broken.

Call 911 or go to the emergency room

if there is **swelling of the face, mouth or neck with trouble breathing or swallowing**, or a serious injury to the face or jaw. Do not wait.

Sikka Dental: (408) 259-1280 · Monday–Friday, 8:30 AM–5:00 PM

TOGETHER

Keep your smile healthy

Why regular visits matter

- We check your teeth, gums and mouth.
- We clean off hard plaque (tartar).
- We can add extra protection, like fluoride, if you need it.
- We find small problems early.

How often? It is different for each person. Dr. Sikka will suggest the right schedule for you.

Bring to your visit

- A list of your medicines
- Any changes in your health
- Your dentures or appliances
- Your questions
- What helps you feel calm

A message for caregivers

Thank you for everything you do. Helping someone with daily care takes patience and love.

- Doing it every day matters more than perfect.
- Let your loved one help as much as they can.
- Celebrate small wins.
- It is okay to stop and try again later.
- Take care of yourself, too.
- Call us anytime you need ideas.

SOURCES

This guide is for general education and does not replace your personal dental care plan. It is based on guidance from:

1. American Dental Association (ADA). Toothbrushes. ada.org
2. ADA MouthHealthy. Brushing Your Teeth. mouthhealthy.org
3. ADA. Statement on Regular Dental Visits (2013).
4. ADA. Denture Care and Maintenance. ada.org
5. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR). Dental Care Every Day: A Caregiver's Guide. nidcr.nih.gov
6. NIDCR. Practical Oral Care for People With Intellectual Disability. nidcr.nih.gov
7. NIDCR. Dry Mouth (reviewed Oct. 2024) and Dry Mouth and Older Adults (2023). nidcr.nih.gov
8. Mayo Clinic. Denture care: How do I clean dentures? mayoclinic.org
9. Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme. Toothbrushing with fluoride toothpaste ("spit, don't rinse"). sdcep.org.uk

THANK YOU

Every smile deserves care.
Every small step makes a difference.



SIKKA DENTAL CORP.

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We are here to help you. Call us anytime you have a question.