

Which toothbrush do I use?



Manual:

- If using a manual toothbrush it is important to make sure it has soft bristles. With the right technique, the soft bristles actually clean more thoroughly than a hard toothbrush without contributing so much to abrasion

Electric:

- Many of the rechargeable electric toothbrushes nowadays come with an indicator which lights up or shuts off the toothbrush when you brush too hard. Many people also find these easier to use than manual toothbrushes.
- Although their initial purchase price is higher, they can save you money in the long run.

Toothbrush Abrasion



Creating Smiles with Care



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What is Toothbrush Abrasion?

We all know that we need to brush and floss everyday. Proper brushing removes plaque, food debris and bacteria from our teeth. However, using excessive force while brushing can actually damage and traumatize the very teeth we are trying to keep healthy.

Imagine if you took your toothbrush and moved it back and forth along your skin in the same area and with enough pressure, you would cause your skin to turn red and it may hurt. If you kept up this pace, your brush may eventually cause damage to your skin, cause a little bleeding, and hurt a lot.

If we use this scenario on the teeth themselves, it's easy to see that, with over brushing we can wear down the enamel on the teeth as well as damage and push back the gums, exposing the sensitive root area.



How does it affect the teeth?

Toothbrush abrasion affects both teeth and gums. Often the earliest sign of the problem is what people describe as a 'little ledge' in the tooth at the very margin of the gum. The person often feels this with a fingernail and sometimes there is an 'electric shock sensation' when the area is touched with the fingernail or a toothbrush bristle. Very often there are no shocking symptoms although sensitivity to cold is quite common.

As the damage progresses it becomes more and more noticeable, with the gum tissue receding back causing the tooth to look longer as more of its root surface is exposed. The damage to the tooth eventually manifests as a v-shaped notch at the gum margin which increases over time in both width and depth.



What do I do about this?

- Visit your dentist or hygienist to discover the cause of the toothbrush abrasion and monitor the condition of your teeth.
- A minor notch, if detected early, may not need major treatment and can be managed with desensitizing agents.
- A deeper notch will require greater attention. If the notch is left exposed, food and bacteria can become trapped in hidden corners and this will lead to tooth decay. Furthermore the deeper notch can weaken the tooth and can result in tooth fracture if you bite too hard. Your dentist will repair the toothbrush abrasion with a tooth coloured material that help fill up the notch, improve appearance and reduce teeth sensitivity.
- Visit your Dental Hygienist. As this condition is very common, your hygienist will be able to recommend the best way to modify your tooth brushing technique to avoid trauma.
- Modify your brushing technique and even consider using an electric toothbrush. See over page for more information on this.