

Using the Right Toothbrush

A great oral hygiene routine involves brushing your teeth twice and flossing daily. A toothbrush is an essential tool for removing food debris, preventing bacterial build-up and development of plaque. Different brands offer a broad range of toothbrushes with varying degrees of hardness and size. Though it might seem like a daunting task, choosing the right type of toothbrush is necessary for maintaining good dental health. Finding the right toothbrush that fits your personal needs will make a huge difference in keeping your teeth clean and healthy. But with so many different sizes, shapes, styles and bristle choices, how do you know if you are using the right toothbrush for your mouth? We at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) are here to help you find out!

Hard vs. Soft Bristles

The use of a toothbrush with hard bristles may lead to the damage of the teeth and cause your gum line to recede. In fact, scientific research has shown that brushing teeth with hard bristles, especially when combined with aggressive brushing techniques is a leading cause of sensitive teeth. Soft-bristled toothbrushes, on the other hand, are comfortable and safe for both gums and teeth often working to give the best results after a brushing exercise. If you feel that a soft-bristled brush is too gentle for your teeth and may fail to clean properly, then a medium-bristled toothbrush is recommended.

Toothbrush Head Size

The next most important thing when choosing a toothbrush is the size of the head. It's important to understand that when it comes to toothbrushes, it's never one size fits all kind of situation. People with a bigger mouth will require a larger brush while those with smaller mouths should use smaller

toothbrushes. This is to allow the brush to reach and clean all contours of the teeth without missing any spots. A small and compact toothbrush works for most people generally, as it's able to reach the hard-to-access places like the sides of molars and back of the teeth.

Electric or Manual Toothbrush

Both an electric and manual toothbrush can clean the teeth effectively if used with the right brushing techniques. However, for some people, especially those with limited dexterity or those not used to using manual toothbrushes, electric toothbrushes are more suitable. Children with braces may have difficulties brushing in a circular motion due to the obstruction caused by their orthodontic brackets making an electric-powered toothbrush more ideal for them.

Toothbrush Handle

As for the handle, it should be long enough to hold comfortably and help you to change directions and brush from all sides easily. Never be carried away by toothbrushes with colorful or glittery handles but find a toothbrush that provides better grip and greater control. The perfect handle grip should aid in holding the brush at the correct angle.

Your toothbrush loses its effectiveness and even becomes a breeding ground for bacteria hence should frequently be replaced. Replace your toothbrush every three months or earlier if the bristles are frayed. If you have recently suffered from a cold or infection, use a new toothbrush to avoid re-infection. Remember to always look for a high-quality toothbrush that has the American Dental Association seal of approval. Having followed all the tips on choosing the right toothbrush, it's important to periodically visit your dentist at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) for professional cleanings and checkups.

5 Long-Term Effects of Avoiding Dental Care

There are several reasons why people avoid taking proper care of their teeth, such as skipping brushing due to lack of time or avoiding your dentist due to dental anxiety. Our smiles are more valuable than we think; even healthy gums and teeth can suffer the consequences of inadequate dental care. We at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) have compiled a list of the long-term effects of avoiding dental care that may happen if you keep neglecting to visit a dentist regularly and taking proper care of your teeth.

Tooth Decay

Not giving your mouth proper care will attract harmful bacteria to your teeth and gums, which can cause massive damage. Studies show that bacteria can survive, overgrow, and become unbalanced in one's mouth and can put the enamel in significant danger. Once the enamel is torn up, there is no other way to replace it. Too much tooth decay can cause a huge hole in a tooth that cannot be repaired by fillings alone, leaving the tooth vulnerable to cavities.

Gum Disease

Bacteria and plaque often gather around the gum line and can cause irritation to both a tooth's root and the gums. Gum disease can also cause serious damage, including loose teeth, the appearance of elongated teeth, and bleeding gums.

Oral Cancer & Teeth Staining

There are various risk factors that can cause oral cancer such

as smoking, alcohol, and exposure to UV light. Research indicates that there are approximately 50,000 Americans who are diagnosed with oral cancer each year. Consider scheduling for a regular screening of oral cancer to avoid the risk factors involved and the impacts of poor dental care. Visiting a dentist on a regular basis helps to keep your teeth clean consistently. Our teeth are naturally porous, which makes them susceptible to having stains over time, a common phenomenon for people who are fond of drinking red wine, coffee or tea.

Painful Toothaches and Tooth Loss

Over a long period, the untreated teeth will progress into becoming painful. Once the pain becomes persistent it will become evident enough that you will need a more invasive treatment, such as root canal or tooth extraction. The infections of the gum consequently lead to inflammation, which can result in separation of the tooth, causing the teeth to become very loose to the point of falling off if not treated.

Risk of Developing Other Diseases

The accumulation of bacteria in the mouth creates an impending problem and once the bacterium is released into the mouth, there is a possibility of causing systemic infections. People who have gum problems are more than likely to develop cardiac problems such as heart attacks. Also, there are increased possibilities of getting respiratory problems, dementia, erectile dysfunction, and diabetes complications.

What to Do Next

Your smile is very significant to both you and the people who surround you. Most importantly, your teeth aid you in speaking and chewing. This leaves you with no option but to pay regular visits to a dentist at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) and to always keep your teeth clean and healthy. Visiting us at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) regularly and taking proper care of your teeth can alter the negative impacts of avoiding dental care.

What Is TMJ?

Have you ever heard or read the initials TMJ and wondered what they meant? TMJ stands for the temporomandibular joint, the hinge that connects the jaw to the skull. For many people, issues with TMJ may seem like a natural part of life. After all, it's increasingly common for adults to suffer from inflammation of the TMJ at some point in their lives. Inflammation symptoms for most people can last for only a day, or can last for years.

As common as TMJ inflammation may be, TMJ complications usually arise from the tension in the jaw and the muscles that control its movement. While these issues are not commonly perceived as being preventable, you can reduce their causes by reducing this tension and the activities associated with it.

We at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) have put together a list of common reasons that your TMJ can become inflamed and how to prevent them.

Stress

Much of the reason TMJ issues persist for adults between the ages of 20 and 40 are because these are widely accepted as the formative years for stress. As most people finish their highest level of education and enter the workforce, stress about supporting a family, student loans, and countless other factors are at their peak. These high levels of stress can show in your face and jaw, resulting from the formation of tension in the muscles around the TMJ, leading to inflammation in the area.

While it would be foolish to think that you could simply prevent stress, finding a way of stress and tension management

could go a long way towards improving the health of your jaw. Some common treatment options include prayer, meditation, talk therapy, and medications to treat anxiety and depression. You can also make it a priority to spend time with people or activities that reduce your stress level.

Diet

When you eat food that is particularly difficult to bite or chew, you may be inviting unnecessary irritation in the TMJ area. What constitutes tension in the TMJ is different for different people, meaning that there is no definitive list of foods that are problematic for TMJ irritation. There are some obvious ones like taffy and especially chewy candy, but TMJ complications can also result from eating things like apples, popcorn, and carrots.

The surest way to act in prevention of TMJ problems associated with diet is to avoid eating foods frequently that take a significant effort to chew. If TMJ pain should occur, consider tracking your meals and your pain levels accordingly to get an idea of which foods are causing TMJ irritation.

Teeth Behavior

Grinding and clenching your teeth also can irritate the TMJ. For many people, clenching and grinding happens at night, so it isn't as simple as making an honest effort to stop. There are products resembling mouth guards that you can wear to sleep to cut down on pressure and damage from grinding or clenching your teeth overnight.

Posture

Believe it or not, your posture may affect the alignment of the bones and muscles through your neck, spine, and jaw. Practicing excellent posture daily can be a key factor in preventing TMJ-related pain, both while standing up and while sitting in a chair.

Need Help?

While the tips that we have outlined here can certainly help prevent or alleviate some aspects of TMJ irritation, they are by no means replacements for seeing one of our specialists here at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#). If you are experiencing pain where your jawbone meets your skull, please give us a call at [\(704\) 274-3161](#) to schedule an appointment immediately. One of our dental health professionals will be able to properly diagnose your situation and help you maintain a pain-free jaw!

Are Genetics to Blame for Poor Dental Health?

Our genes affect virtually about our bodies, including the way we look, our risk factors for certain diseases, and even our smiles. Researchers have been examining the link between poor oral health and the genes you inherited from your parents. Are genetics to blame for your dental health? We at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) are here to help you find out!

Some People Have an Increased Risk for Cavities

Based on your unique genetic makeup, you may have an increased risk for tooth decay. Researchers have discovered that people whose parents suffered from tooth decay were also more prone to cavities based on their genetic constitution. You may be more susceptible to cavities even if you eat well and take care of your teeth, as opposed to someone who has different genes and doesn't try as hard to take care of their smile.

Teeth Size and Shape May Be Influenced as Well

In addition to a potential genetic predisposition towards cavities, the size and shape of teeth are the result of genetics too; if your parents had crooked teeth, crowded teeth, small teeth, or uneven teeth, you're more likely to suffer from these problems as well. You may be more in need of orthodontic work in the future than people who are born with naturally straight teeth.

Gum Disease Linked to Poor Immune Response

Gum disease isn't left out of the picture when it comes to genetics. People who suffer from gum disease, nearly half of the American population in fact, may be more likely to get the disease based on the genes related to their immune system. People who have poor immune responses or have a family history of autoimmune disorders may have an increased risk of gum disease.

But It's Not All Genetics

Although there are certainly genetic factors that influence your smile, genetics are not totally to blame for poor dental health. You play a huge role in keeping your smile healthy just by taking care of your teeth! Brushing, flossing, and healthy eating are all huge lifestyle factors that can improve your smile.

What Can You Do?

Avoiding tobacco products, excessive alcohol consumption, and getting regular dental checkups can all help your smile. If you have a poor immune system or a family history of tooth decay, talk to your dentist about your risk. Although some people only need to visit the dentist once a year, your dentist may suggest two or three times a year to be safe.

Pay Us a Visit at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#)

Genetics are hugely influential to our bodies and our health.

However, how you care for your teeth may play an even bigger role. Don't use your genetic makeup as an excuse to not take care of your smile. Everyone needs to brush and floss regardless of how healthy their teeth are. If you have further questions or want to come in for a consultation, pay us a visit at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) today. By exercising the best care of your smile, you can balance your risk and have beautiful teeth for life!

Are You Ready for Spring Cleaning?

Spring has sprung! Are you ready to do some spring cleaning? Most of us can agree that having a clean house and a clutter-free life is cathartic and helps start spring off on the right foot. However, though we may value spring cleaning, a lot of us hate having to do the work to make it possible. How can all of us make spring cleaning easier and less stressful? [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) is here to help you find out!

Spring Cleaning Doesn't Mean Cleaning Spree

The classical model for spring cleaning is a giant, all-out, week-long cleaning spree that affects every area of the house. But it doesn't have to be this way! Prioritizing each cleaning task for a few a day or one big project a week will take a lot of the stress out of spring cleaning. You could also tackle one room from top to bottom per week until you're done!

Make a List and Stick to It

Writing down the cleaning tasks to be done is the best way to ensure that nothing gets missed. Sit down and close your eyes,

mentally walk through every room in your house, and imagine it how you want it to look. Then physically walk through the rooms and write down the things that you need to do for your real house to match your idealized, clean house. But most importantly, stick to your list! The more that your list reflects your actions, the less likely you are to get lost, discouraged, or miss something.

Get the Whole Family Involved

One of the easiest ways to make spring cleaning less strenuous is by making it a family affair. Assign everyone in the family an age appropriate task, which will teach children why chores are important while they're still young, not to mention the importance of personal discipline. And don't forget that cleaning doesn't have to be a chore if it's done in the right spirit! Cleaning can be a great way to connect families together, so take advantage of this time with your children by connecting with them or doing some other activity at the same time, like listening to music or talking.

Your Teeth Need Spring Cleaning Too!

Don't forget to take care of your teeth during all your spring cleaning! Your teeth deserve to be as fresh and sparkling as your house. Give us at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) a call to schedule an appointment today!

What to Do During a Dental Emergency

While most people know how to do basic maintenance on their teeth (brushing, flossing, etc.), many people are unsure of

what constitutes a dental emergency and what to do when one occurs. Accidents are inevitable, so knowing what to do when a dental accident occurs can save you a lot of pain and might even save your life!

Most dental emergencies relate to bleeding, swelling, loss of teeth, tissue injuries, pain or facial trauma. These and any other types of dental emergencies should be attended to by a dental practitioner as soon as possible. However, if a dentist is not available and you have a dental emergency, visit an emergency room immediately to avoid further damage.

Here are some of the most common dental emergencies that we at [Charlotte Dentistry](#)® have encountered and how to manage them until professional medical care is available.

Knocked Out/Avulsed Tooth

If your tooth is knocked out, it has a better chance of surviving the trauma if you schedule for an emergency dental appointment within an hour after the injury. Meanwhile, you can retrieve the tooth and gently rinse it with water. Make sure to hold the tooth by the crown and not by the root. Holding the tooth this way will keep it from drying out. Store the tooth in a clean cloth and immerse it in milk or a saline medium. Get to see your dentist as soon as possible for help.

Broken Tooth

In the event of a broken or chipped tooth, rinse your mouth out with warm water to clear out any residual broken or chipped pieces. If you spot bleeding at the break point, apply gauze to the area until the bleeding stops. Use a cold compress to the outside of the mouth near the broken tooth to help reduce swelling, irritation or pain. Visit a dentist as soon as possible to restore the broken tooth.

Broken Tooth (Dentures)

If you wear dentures and a tooth breaks off, wear your spare dentures, if you have spares. If not, use cyanoacrylate (a family of strong fast-acting adhesives with industrial, medical, and household uses) to stick the broken piece in place as a temporary measure until you see your dentist.

Toothache

Toothaches are common dental emergencies that lead to discomfort, pain, or soreness within a person's gums. Toothaches are usually indicative of inflammation or possible infection, so they need to be tended to immediately. The first step is to brush your teeth well and floss to remove any debris that may be stuck between your teeth. If pain persists, acetaminophen is recommended for temporary relief. However, under no circumstance should you directly use aspirin on tooth or gums as it may burn the tooth tissues. Make an appointment with your dentist immediately to treat a toothache.

Facial Trauma

Facial trauma or maxillofacial trauma is an injury to the face affecting the facial bones such as the upper or lower jaw bones. Facial injuries may produce pain, swelling, change in shape of facial structures, or loss of function (e.g. difficulty moving the jaw). If you suspect that your jaw is misaligned or dislocated, seek dental assistance as soon as possible. If medical attention cannot be accessed, tie the bottom of the jaw to the top of the head using a tie, scarf, or handkerchief. Make sure not to tie too tightly and find your way to an emergency room immediately.

Always Remember...

In the event of a dental emergency, stay calm. Arrange for a dental treatment to get professional help the next time you experience a dental emergency.

Handling your dental injuries in the right manner can make all

the difference in the world. We at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) regularly perform emergency dental procedures and have Saturday hours so that we can take care of you during emergencies when they arise!

Billy Graham, Welcome Home

Yesterday was a sad day for all of us here at Charlotte Dentistry. Billy Graham, one of the greatest evangelists that the world has ever known, died at the age of 99.

It was a day of reflection as we remembered the man, his legacy, the family he left behind, and the great achievements he accomplished in his life on Earth. He spiritually counseled every U.S. president since Harry Truman, preached to millions for decades, and communicated the Good News about saving faith in Jesus Christ as no one else before him ever had.

However, amidst the sadness and reflection, we also rejoice in the eternal promise of salvation and that Billy Graham lead many souls to join him in Heaven.

The influence of Billy Graham has been felt here at Charlotte Dentistry. Some of our staff have been privileged to treat members of the Graham family and one staff member sang in Billy Graham's choir. Another of our staff summed it up perfectly:

"I remembered Billy Graham said, 'God has given us two hands, one to receive with and the other to give with.' I believe that is what we do here at Charlotte Dentistry with our patients; we serve them each day with an honest heart, not expecting anything in return."

But no matter our relationship with Billy Graham, his influence on Christianity, American politics, culture, and what it means to be a person of faith in our country was undeniable and will be felt for generations.

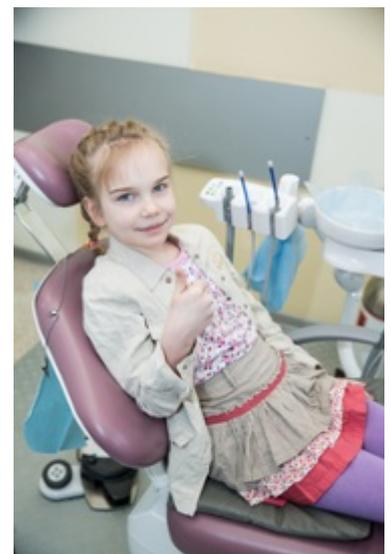
Welcome home, Billy Graham, and thank you for tireless service to the Lord.

“When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: ‘Death has been swallowed up in victory.’”

▪ 1 Corinthians 15:54

Questions To Ask Your Dentist About Your Child’s Teeth

At [Charlotte Dentistry®](#), we love questions from patients. We know that the better the communication between our dental professionals and you, the better you and your family’s dental care will be. We encourage patients to make lists of questions before they come in so nothing gets forgotten and we can properly address any concerns.



Having a list of questions ready is especially useful when it comes to children’s dental visits, particularly during a

child's first ever dental appointment. First dental visits with little ones can cause some anxiety for both child and parent, but our staff is skilled at making everyone feel comfortable. We at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) make sure to give you the information you need so that your child has the best dental health possible.

What kinds of questions should you ask at a dental visit on behalf of your child? Most of the new mothers we know aren't shy about bringing up any issue that concerns them, but just in case, we've included a list of common questions you can ask, courtesy of the Partnership for Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives:

- How can I ensure that my child's teeth are clean?
- How can I prevent baby bottle tooth decay?
- Do you have any advice on how to get my child to brush his or her teeth?
- What foods will improve my child's dental health?
- Should my child get sealants to prevent cavities?
- How are the teeth and jaws developing?
- If there are any problems, will you discuss orthodontic needs?

You can even download a printout of these questions at [HERE](#).

The Partnership for Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives is a coalition of 36 leading organizations in the field of oral health. The Partnership is committed to improve children's oral health so that they can develop into healthy, productive adults. The Partnership shares the view that no child should be in pain and suffer broader health issues or endure the social stigma and lack of opportunity resulting from untreated dental diseases and conditions. The Partnership's primary mission is to teach parents and caregivers, as well as the children themselves, to take control of their own health through oral disease prevention.

Here are some other questions that you might want to ask:

- What example should I set to encourage my children to practice good dental health?
- Are there any early signs of an oral health problem that I should be aware of?
- How critical is care for baby teeth, since they're going to be replaced anyway?

During your child's visit, especially the first one, we'll ask a lot of questions too. We want to get to know your child and your family, that way we better understand their best approaches for routine care that will provide the most benefit.

After your visit, don't feel that you should wait until the next 6-month checkup to get information. Simply [call us](#) at any time and we'll be glad to answer more questions!

A good early start on proper dental care can help make sure your child has a bright, healthy smile for a whole lifetime. We at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) are delighted to help make that happen!

Why Do We Celebrate Valentine's Day Anyway?

We at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#) wish you a Happy Valentine's Day! We all know how much Valentine's Day means to us in our personal lives and as a society, but so few of us think of the man to whom the holiday owes its origins: St. Valentine. Who was he and why don't we talk about him nearly as much as we should?

Part of it has to do with the unfortunately dark origins of Valentine's Day, all centered around St. Valentine's acts of love that ran contrary to the official policies of the Roman Empire around the year 270 A.D. During the reign of Claudius II, also known as Claudius the Cruel, Rome had engaged in many unpopular military campaigns that resulted in numerous casualties. As Enlistments in the Roman legions declined, Emperor Claudius II concluded that it was because Roman men had become too attached to their wives and families to join the army. To combat the problem, the emperor banned all marriages and engagements in Rome.

However, an early Christian priest named Valentine married couples in secret in direct defiance of the emperor's orders. When Emperor Claudius learned of Valentine's secret weddings, he sentenced Valentine to be clubbed to death and beheaded. According to legend, prior to his execution, Valentine had left a note to the jailer's daughter, signing it "From your Valentine", which is the direct inspiration for Valentine's Day cards today. After his death, Valentine was officially declared a saint by the Catholic Church.

While St. Valentine's story is tragic and influential, it should be mentioned that, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "At least three different Saint Valentines, all of them martyrs, are mentioned in the early martyrologies under the date of 14 February." As has happened with many historical figures from antiquity that have achieved legendary status, it's possible that elements of all three St. Valentines became intertwined over the centuries as the holiday that we know today came into existence.

But just how did the holiday itself form? In 496 A.D., Pope Gelasius I officially declared that February 14 become Valentine's Day, thus merging with and putting an end to the original pagan holiday known as Feast of Lupercalia, celebrated at around the same time of year. This was a common practice in the early centuries of Christianity; as the faith

spread across Europe, religious observances were set to occur at the same time as preestablished pagan holidays to better integrate Christianity into the consciousness of early pre-Christian Europeans.

It wasn't until the 1300s that people started to associate February 14th as a romantic holiday, possibly because it marked the beginning of mating season for birds. The tradition of exchanging cards and gifts caught on in Great Britain in the 1700s and soon spread to America. Today, it is estimated that 1 billion cards, 35 million chocolates and 220 million roses will be exchanged on Valentine's Day. It's also estimated that 6 million couples will get engaged.

Happy Valentine's Day to you and your special someone from all of us here at [Charlotte Dentistry®](#)!

Help Add Years to Your Parents' Lives

Years ago, when my children were being obnoxious youngsters, I would say they were giving me gray hairs and taking years off my life. If you could see my hair now, you would wonder what those kids must have put me through to give me a full head of white hair. However, as far as years being taken off my life, my kids have given them all back to me. How? Regular phone calls and visits to combat loneliness.

Research has shown that loneliness and social isolation are downright terrible for the health of older adults. Some have even called loneliness a bigger health risk than smoking or obesity. By spending more time building relationships with your parents, you can help them have a more fulfilling life

without loneliness, which in turn will make them live longer.

As people age, relationships with their family become more important than ever. Spending time with loved ones or friends often leads to laughter. Laughing is a powerful means of combating mental illness, such as depression and cognitive impairment, as well as other health problems like coronary artery disease. Laughter has been shown to boost immunity, lower blood pressure, and stimulate both blood flow and mental activity. Younger family members will also benefit from spending time with senior family members by learning family history, traditions, recipes, and funny family stories.

With these principles in mind, try to schedule routine visits with your parents, starting this week. If your schedule doesn't allow or you don't live near your parents, work in time for a quick phone call or video chat through Skype, FaceTime, or Facebook Messenger. Check in with them routinely, talk to them, and share what is going on in your life. It makes your parents feel like they are a part of your life and lets them know that you care about them. And last but not least, don't forget Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and your mother."