Mechanical Plaque Control

Plaque
- Major causative factor in
  - Caries
  - Periodontal disease
- Daily removal of plaque prevents oral disease
- Mechanical plaque removal achieved by
  - Toothbrush, floss, interdental brushes (home)
  - Professional cleaning (dental professional)

Toothbrushing serves two different and important functions
- Mechanical debridement
- Delivery system – toothpaste and other agents

Mouth cleaning dates back to earliest recorded history
- First “toothbrush” introduced in the 15th Century in China
- First modern toothbrush introduced in England in 1780 by William Addis – mass produced
- Nylon toothbrush bristles in 1938 in USA (Du Pont)
- First electric toothbrush on market in 1960s (Broxodent)
- 1987 – first rotary action electric toothbrush

Our objective as oral health professionals is to encourage patients to brush regularly and effectively to prevent disease.

1986 State of the Science Workshop¹ – toothbrushing recommendations:
- Twice daily toothbrushing with a fluoridated toothpaste
- Avoid forceful brushing

How often do Australians change their toothbrush?
- Approx 35 million toothbrushes sold/year
- Approx 1.8 brushes/person/year
- 90% manual and 10% powered

Patient toothbrushing instruction – act as a facilitator not a judge – there is no one toothbrush that is right for every patient.

Shopping Behaviour
- Toothbrush category in shops is confusing – consumers browse and spend a lot of time in the section
- Consumers consider – user (adult/child), manual vs powered, bristle strength and functional features
- Bristle strength is the most important feature in making a choice
- 50% of shoppers make product choice in store
  - Price is the most common choice driver
  - Second reason – regular/favourite brand
  - Colour and graphics influence children’s brush purchase
References


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