









# TIPS FOR GOOD TOOTHBRUSHING

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY & TOOTH BRUSHING

- Occupational therapists assist in helping others achieve optimal independence and building skills in their day to day activities.
- Toothbrushing falls within the occupation of ADL's (activities of daily living), specifically in the area of personal hygiene and grooming (OTPF-IV, 2020).
- People of all ages can be limited or unable to brush their teeth, leading to poor oral hygiene; resulting in cavities, gum disease and many other oral health problems that could have been minimized by brushing teeth and routine check-ups at the dentist.



## TOOTHBRUSHING DO'S & DON'TS

-  **DO:** Brush your teeth at least twice a day (preferably in the morning & before bedtime).
-  **DO:** Brush your teeth for 2 minutes total, every time you brush.
-  **DO:** Make sure you brush each section - upper right, upper left, lower right and lower left, middle, front and back.
-  **DO:** Brush your tongue and use dental floss between your teeth to reduce bacteria.
-  **DO:** Replace your toothbrush every three months or after a virus or infection.
-  **DON'T:** Consume excessive amounts of sugary food and drinks.
-  **DON'T:** Brush too hard. It can cause breakdown of enamel or damage gums.
-  **DON'T:** Share your toothbrush with others due to germ transferring.

(CDC, 2022)



## ORAL HYGIENE FOR ASD & SENSORY PROCESSEING

- Children with ASD or sensory processing disorders have been reported to be less likely to engage in proper oral hygiene and toothbrushing due to their individual needs and sensitivities. (Randell et. al., 2017; Zerman et. al., 2022).
- As few as 50% of children with ASD and sensory processing disorders brushed their teeth twice per day (Como et. al., 2020).
- Up to 61% of parents with children with ASD report that toothbrushing is difficult (Como et. al., 2020).
- Sensory sensitivities; such as the textures of the brush in their mouth or the toothpaste (Duncan et. al., 2021) were a significant factor for lack of oral care.
- Individuals with ASD are at higher risk of developing dental problems and untreated dental diseases as they age in comparison to their typical peers (Alumran et. al., 2018).
- This population also shows a higher prevalence of gingivitis (Corridore et. al., 2020). Which could be due to:

- Specific dietary behaviors with preferences for sweet and soft foods (Delli et. al., 2013).
- Tendency to retain food in their mouth without swallowing it for elongated periods of time (Delli et. al., 2013).

All of which perpetuate poor oral hygiene in addition to non compliance of brushing their teeth.



## EVIDENCE BASED TIPS & TRICKS

- Early desensitization
- Play Based
- Modeling/Visual Aids
- Toothbrush Options



Video Link: <https://youtu.be/Ou9CgTUgyP8>

# TIPS FOR GOOD TOOTHBRUSHING

## EARLY DESENSITIZATION

### TIPS & TRICKS

- An early introduction can be key to facilitating healthy brushing habits and getting them used to the feeling in their mouth and gums.
- Using a silicone finger brush with small soft bristles 1-2 times a day can reduce sensory sensitivity in baby's mouth to tolerate brushing in the future.
- It helps keep gums clean even before they have teeth from the ingested milk/formula and starts your child off with a good habit.



## PLAY BASED + TIPS & TRICKS

- Making tooth brushing a fun daily activity to include in your child's routine.
  - Have them pretend they are "racing" themselves in the mirror.
  - Have a 2 minute dance party as they brush their teeth. Or have them brush for 2 minutes to their favorite song.
  - Make it a game of "Simon says" where you call out which area they should brush next.
- Allowing them to choose their toothbrush and toothpaste flavor gives them autonomy which can help them want to engage in the activity.

## MODELING/VISUAL AIDS

### TIPS & TRICKS

- Children observe what their caregivers' habits are as they grow so modeling good oral hygiene can be a precursor to your child engaging in good oral hygiene practices.
  - Letting your child/infant watch you brush and even "help you" hand over hand can be a useful step prepare them in brushing their own teeth.
  - Talk through the steps as you do each one to provide an auditory learning technique.
  - Include the child in your brushing routine and do it together.
- Visual aids:
  - Using various timers can help children keep track of how long they have left to brush.
  - Having them watch videos or reading books of other children in their age group brushing their teeth can be encouraging.



## TOOTHBRUSH OPTIONS

### Before teeth:

- Silicone brush with soft bristles (finger or handled brush)
- As they grow and can grasp things you can provide them teethers with soft silicone bristles as well
- Links:

- <https://www.amazon.com/Baby-Banana-Training-Toothbrush-Teether/dp/B002QYW8LW>
- [https://www.amazon.com/Dr-Browns-Silicone-Toothbrush-Travel-Storage/dp/B0BSIOF9JF/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?crid=MN2GDUC64HDM&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.L6vQ0F80CM0bxWgRO7-jORKEBIOT\\_EIW-wNt4jnEmIurzzGgbyssWwogO\\_cuP9iwwHxywxF77c\\_-8VklHUVMAfvsOstHgP2sST96dYUll-u6gSTewdzIilK9abOWsdVlirDcElJdJcgXyFcMuj35\\_pkS9TOAI8jV9f0RBDSSis0SN4EPoHr0fmlEL\\_VJCIKIZlhQv2l-LGzpkY0kzZOj9HEHD8infiMylHbVdpdKO5EftYtwP9VM\\_EYvbRIWYVVLjpvjAQJLawF466kcYzjC\\_glyr4-CsNCYq8a7bNc.RIR5J\\_uSjwRmSawgRQrAbdgQc5Wcn4CtMz4ML\\_nuUE&dib\\_tag=se&keywords=silicone+finger+brush&qid=1712659206&srefix=silicone+finger+brush%2Caps%2C101&sr=8-5](https://www.amazon.com/Dr-Browns-Silicone-Toothbrush-Travel-Storage/dp/B0BSIOF9JF/ref=sr_1_5?crid=MN2GDUC64HDM&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.L6vQ0F80CM0bxWgRO7-jORKEBIOT_EIW-wNt4jnEmIurzzGgbyssWwogO_cuP9iwwHxywxF77c_-8VklHUVMAfvsOstHgP2sST96dYUll-u6gSTewdzIilK9abOWsdVlirDcElJdJcgXyFcMuj35_pkS9TOAI8jV9f0RBDSSis0SN4EPoHr0fmlEL_VJCIKIZlhQv2l-LGzpkY0kzZOj9HEHD8infiMylHbVdpdKO5EftYtwP9VM_EYvbRIWYVVLjpvjAQJLawF466kcYzjC_glyr4-CsNCYq8a7bNc.RIR5J_uSjwRmSawgRQrAbdgQc5Wcn4CtMz4ML_nuUE&dib_tag=se&keywords=silicone+finger+brush&qid=1712659206&srefix=silicone+finger+brush%2Caps%2C101&sr=8-5)



## TOOTHBRUSH OPTIONS CONTINUED

### After teeth:

A small sized brush that comfortably fits in their mouth is what to look for but there are also fun options that play 2 minutes of music or have their favorite characters on them.

- There are various options that can be chosen from here. When choosing the right brush reflect on what you think your child's needs.
  - Musical options
  - Options with lights
  - Their favorite characters and paste flavors
  - Large grips for small hands to better grasp



## RECOURCES

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**Video Link: <https://youtu.be/Ou9CgTUgyP8>**



Smile bright with proper toothbrushing!

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