

Healthy You

FAST FACTS FOR YOUR HEALTH

Four Pillars of Toothbrush Care

Your toothbrush is the foundational tool of at-home dental care, but when's the last time you thought about maintaining it?

Think about it: It cleans your teeth twice daily. The simple toothbrush is a work horse—and you can keep it operating at its best by following the four pillars of toothbrush care.

1. **Keep your toothbrush to yourself:** Sharing is *not* caring when it comes to a toothbrush. Toothbrushes can retain bacteria from your mouth, and that means they can transmit infections when swapped between users.
2. **A simple rinse is all you need to clean:** No need to boil your toothbrush or use special cleaners. After each use, give your toothbrush a good rinse under the tap to make sure any remaining toothpaste and food particles are washed away.
3. **Ditch the cover:** Keep your toothbrush upright so it can air dry between uses. Storing a toothbrush in a drawer or hiding the bristles under a cover promotes bacteria growth. Learn more in [Three Tips to Safely Store Your Toothbrush](#).
4. **Replacement guidelines:** Most people should replace their toothbrush every 3 to 4 months. If your brush's bristles wear down before the 3-month mark, replace the brush earlier—and take that as a sign that you may be brushing too hard. It's also a good idea to replace your toothbrush after a cold.

Ultimately, caring for your toothbrush also means caring for your total dental health. A little maintenance using these four tips will go a long way toward keeping you healthy.

Source

<https://www.ada.org/en/about-the-ada/ada-positions-policies-and-statements/statement-on-toothbrush-care-cleaning-storage-and->

Three Tips to Safely Store Your Toothbrush

Can a toothbrush cover prevent germs? Is it unsanitary to keep your toothbrush in your bathroom? Do my husband and I need separate toothbrush cups?

For such a small and simple instrument, the toothbrush sparks a lot of questions about proper storage. Fortunately, Dr. Jeffrey Chaffin, Dental Director for Delta Dental of Iowa, shared his top three tips for safely storing your toothbrush.

Tip 1: Think *high and dry*: Chaffin said the most important rule of thumb for toothbrush storage is to make sure the brush can dry out between uses. “The American Dental Association recommends you store toothbrushes in the upright position, so they can air dry,” he said. If you use a cup to prop your toothbrush up, make sure your brush’s bristles aren’t touching anyone else’s to help prevent germs from spreading.

Tip 2: Your toothbrush can stay in the bathroom:

Storing your toothbrush in the bathroom is just plain convenient, but you can’t help but wonder if having it near the toilet is sanitary. “Keeping the toothbrush in the bathroom is quite normal,” Chaffin said. “Some suggest that you should keep 6 feet from the toilet and ensure you close the toilet lid each time before flushing, but there is no scientific evidence to support this.” If you want to be extra careful, put some distance between your toothbrush and the toilet—but no need to banish the brush from the bathroom.

Tip 3: The verdict on toothbrush covers: The idea of using a toothbrush cover as a germ-blocking barrier seems legitimate, but it violates Chaffin’s No. 1 safe storage rule: Allow the brush to air dry.

“You don’t want to cover the toothbrush, because covering actually promotes bacteria growth,” he said. While Chaffin says you should avoid toothbrush covers for everyday use, he said short-term uses (like during travel) are OK.

