



Keeping a clean toothbrush

Your mouth is home to **hundreds** of different types of bacteria, which can be transferred to your toothbrush when you use it. Ew. Want to know what's even more unsettling though? You know how you keep your toothbrush in the bathroom? And you know how you flush the toilet? Well, **gastrointestinal microorganisms** fly into the air... **and land on your toothbrush**. And, those microorganisms can be transferred to your mouth when brushing. Yuck! For these reasons, proper handling and care of your toothbrush is important to your overall health.



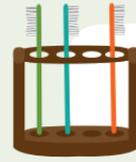
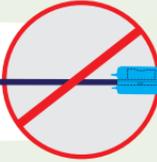
Some ways to keep your **toothbrush and mouth** as clean as possible include:

Rinse your toothbrush with clean tap water after brushing to remove any remaining toothpaste and debris.



Soaking toothbrushes in an antibacterial mouth rinse has been shown to decrease the level of bacteria that grow on toothbrushes.

Don't store your toothbrush in a closed container or cover it. A damp environment can cause bacteria to grow on the brush.



You should store your toothbrush in an upright position and allow them to air dry. If you have multiple brushes, keep them separated to prevent cross-contamination.

Replace toothbrushes at least every three to four months or when bristles become frayed and worn, whichever comes first.



You might also consider replacing your toothbrush after an illness. Infection can be transferred from germs on the toothbrush into your mouth.

Use antimicrobial mouth rinse before brushing. This can decrease the amount of bacteria in your mouth, as well as the number of microorganisms on your toothbrush after brushing.



You shouldn't share... because you'll also be sharing bacteria between each other, which can lead to other dental problems.



Be sure to have regular dental cleanings. This can reduce the bacteria in your mouth, and therefore on your toothbrush as well. If you have gum disease, it's especially important to get cleanings because bacteria in the mouth can enter the bloodstream. That can put you at higher risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.