



# Toothbrush Abrasion

For your dental health.

We all know that we need to brush and floss every day. Proper brushing removes plaque, food debris, and bacteria from our teeth. Improper brushing, though, can be destructive, damaging the very teeth and gums that we're trying to keep healthy.

## What causes toothbrush abrasion?

Toothbrush abrasion is caused by improper brushing. As strange as it may seem, teeth and gums are fragile tissues. Improper brushing can cause destructive problems like:

- Receding gums
- Wearing away of tooth structure at the gum line
- Sensitive teeth
- Weaker teeth

## How to brush properly

Proper tooth brushing involves these three things:

- A soft toothbrush
- A non-abrasive toothpaste with fluoride
- Good brushing technique

Use a soft toothbrush. A soft toothbrush also makes it much easier to remove the plaque below the gum line, where periodontal disease starts.

Use a pea-sized amount of non-abrasive toothpaste with fluoride. Fluoride hardens the outer enamel layer of teeth, may stop a developing cavity, and gives you more resistance to future cavities. Toothpastes that are labeled "whitening" or "tartar control" can sometimes be too rough on receding gums and exposed roots, wearing away the root's protective layer. You can be sure a toothpaste is non-abrasive if it's labeled "sensitive."

Use proper brushing technique. Angle the bristles of the brush along the gum line at a 45 degree angle and apply just enough pressure so the bristles slide under the gum line. Vibrate the brush while you move it in short back and forth strokes and in small circular motions. Don't brush too hard. If you're not sure whether you're pressing too hard, try holding the brush with two fingers. That's all the force the brush needs to remove bacteria from the gum line. Here's another tip: if your brush bristles have bent over with time, you probably have been pressing too hard.

If you find that you have a hard time brushing gently, consider using an electric toothbrush. They remove food, bacteria, and plaque very well, and they make it much easier to use less pressure. These days, some advanced electric toothbrushes will even stop or alert you when you are pressing too hard.

And don't forget to floss. Brushing harder won't get bacteria out from between the teeth.



*Wearing of tooth structure*



*Use a soft toothbrush*