ORAL FITNESS FACT SHEET

# Choose Your Weapons – Toothbrush

Your most important weapon against oral disease is your toothbrush. For best results, use it twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

Choose a toothbrush with a size and shape that fits you. Your toothbrush should have:

- A small, multi-tufted head (1" by 1/2" or smaller) that can easily fit around your back teeth.
- Soft or ultrasoft nylon bristles with rounded ends that won't hurt your gums.
- A long, wide handle that fits your hand comfortably and firmly.

Electric toothbrushes work well if they are used properly. Use slow movements that cover each tooth. The most effective ones have soft nylon bristles and move in a clockwise/counter-clockwise motion (rotational oscillation).

## Toothbrush Safety

- Avoid medium and hard bristle toothbrushes! They can wear away your gums and teeth.
- Use light force. Too much pressure causes the bristles to bend and can wear away your gums.
- Do not share toothbrushes because of the risk for infection.

## Take Care of Your Toothbrush

- Rinse your toothbrush clean after every use.
- Allow it to air dry. If you use a cover, make sure it has small holes for airing to prevent growth of bacteria.
- Store it in an upright position.
- Change your toothbrush or toothbrush head (if you're using an electric toothbrush)
  - Before the bristles become worn and bend outward.
  - Every three to four months.
  - After being sick.

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