

Is Your Toothbrush Making You Sick?

Your toothbrush is one of the most important tools for keeping your mouth healthy, but it may also be harboring more bacteria than you think. A recent study published in the *International Journal of Dental Hygiene* examined toothbrushes used for one and three months, testing for harmful bacteria including *Streptococcus mutans* (a major driver of tooth decay), *Staphylococcus aureus*, and Enterobacteriaceae. Every single brush tested positive for all three and those used for three months carried significantly higher levels.

Replace your brush regularly. The study found that bacterial levels climb the longer a brush is in use. We recommend replacing your toothbrush every one to three months, don't wait until the bristles look frayed.

Store it wisely. Where and how you store your brush matters. Keep it upright and uncovered so it can air-dry fully between uses.

Keep it away from the toilet. Each flush sends airborne particles into the surrounding area. Store your brush as far from the toilet as possible and always close the lid before flushing.

Never share your toothbrush. Sharing a brush means sharing bacteria directly.

Rinse it well after every use. A thorough rinse under running water after brushing removes residual toothpaste and loose debris that bacteria can feed on. Do not squeeze the bristles with your fingers to remove excess water, unless your hands are washed. Run it through your dishwasher with your utensils, if you have one.

A few simple habits can make a real difference!