

Power toothbrushes to lasers

Technology advances oral care

From souped-up toothbrushes to laser cavity detection, recent technological advances in oral health care give Canadians something to smile about.

On the home front, one of the biggest and best advances in everyday products has been the power toothbrush, according to Dr. Peter Fritz, a periodontist in Fonthill, Ontario.

"They are extremely popular and very effective in attenuating periodontal problems for patients," Dr. Fritz says.

The power brushes are great for people with limited dexterity – from

kids to seniors – and many models have built-in timers to ensure patients are brushing for the right length of time.

They also come in fun, themed models for young children, or models that play rock music. The Canadian Dental Association recognizes a number of power toothbrushes as effective tools for preventing tooth decay and gum disease.

Teeth and gums are also getting better care because of today's variety of dental flosses and flossing accessories.

"The floss technology is always changing, though people still hate to

floss, and I wish they didn't have to. You just have to floss the teeth you want to keep," Dr. Fritz laughs.

Advances in flossing materials have seen waxed floss now sharing shelf space with products made of shred-resistant materials that make it easier for people to floss between tight teeth and get into hard-to-reach spots.

New toothpastes have also entered the spotlight, with the CDA's stringent review process seeing multiple categories met by single toothpastes. One CDA-recognized toothpaste, for example, has set a record for meeting the most cate-

gories including: cavity prevention, reduction of gingivitis, and reduction of tooth sensitivity.

While new technologies are increasingly helping Canadians take better control of their oral health at home, dentists are benefiting from advances in professional dental equipment.

Seven years ago, Toronto dentist Dr. Stephen Abrams became frustrated at his inability to diagnose or see lesions in certain areas of the teeth. He thought there must be a better way than using X-rays and visual cues.

He partnered with a scientist and

has been developing a laser-based detection system that will allow practitioners to spot caries (tooth decay) at a very early stage.

Dr. Abrams says scientists worldwide are working on various early-detection technologies that involve everything from ultrasound to electrical resistance. He adds that, as these systems come into use over the next few years, dentists will be able to work on early diagnosis and treatment rather than on a surgical model of drilling and filling.

"It will be a real shift in the way we'll begin to look at things. We will be able to detect defects in the

enamel...earlier than you'd see with the naked eye and X-ray," Dr. Abrams says.

Currently, by the time a dentist or X-ray spots a cavity, 40 to 50 per cent of the enamel has already been lost.

Scientists are also developing remineralization processes and products, which will reverse early tooth decay and restore lost minerals.

Some early detection devices are on the market now, says Dr. Abrams. He expects these and others undergoing clinical trials to change the face of dentistry over the next three or four years. ■



CDA seal of recognition

You've likely seen that official symbol on your toothpaste or dental floss – the one with the maple leaf, a triangle and traditional medical insignia inside a circle of text stating "Canadian Dental

Association Recognized" – but what does it mean?

It means a lot of work has been done to ensure the product is worthy of the CDA Seal of Recognition, and that consumers can be assured

they are getting products that contribute to oral wellness.

A scientific committee reviews submissions from manufacturers seeking the coveted CDA seal. Clinical and laboratory evidence is reviewed according to strict guidelines, and if there is any doubt, the CDA may ask for additional data and further testing before deciding the fate of an application.

"We do not recognize something that is just average or has a low efficacy. We have high standards and scientific criteria," says Dr. Louise Desnoyers, a Montreal dentist and member of the CDA Seal of Recognition Working Group for 14 years.

"When given, the seal supports highly specific claims of efficacy. Because the program is first and foremost an educational program, "The main goal of the Canadian Dental Association in using the seal

is to help the public and dental professionals make informed choices about personal and professional products. They must meet strict labelling requirements that make sure all the information needed to use it appropriately is present."

CDA recognizes products to promote and improve the oral health of Canadians in a range of 15 categories including toothbrushes, toothpastes, flosses and rinses, denture adhesives

and professional products such as surgical gloves and prescribed oral rinses. Currently, 79 products carry the seal of recognition.

"If it is recognized by the CDA, the science is good, so practitioners know it's good and don't have to read the research themselves. The seal is extremely important to the practicing clinician," says Dr. Stephen Abrams, a Toronto dentist. ■

The following products carry the CDA seal of recognition:

Dental Floss Oral-B Satin Floss Denture Adhesive Fixodent Control Fixodent Free Fixodent Fresh Fixodent Original Manual Toothbrush Colgate Massager Colgate Navigator	Colgate MaxFresh Colgate Sensation Whitening Colgate Twister Fresh Colgate Total Professional Colgate 360 Oral-B Advantage Oral-B CrossAction Vitalizer Oral-B Indicator Oral-B Pulsar Sulcabrush Sulcabrush Travel	Power Toothbrush Oral-B ProfessionalCare 7500 Oral-B ProfessionalCare 8850 DLX Oral-B Sonic Complete Oral-B Vitality Dual Clean Oral-B Vitality Precision Clean Oral-B Vitality Sensitive Mouthwashes and Rinses Crest Pro-Health Oral Rinse Listerine Antiseptic Cool Citrus Mouthwash	Listerine Antiseptic Tartar Control Mouthwash Listerine Antiseptic Cool Mint Mouthwash Listerine Antiseptic Fresh Burst Mouthwash Listerine Antiseptic with Fluoride Mouthwash Listerine Advanced Antiseptic Mouthwash Listerine Antiseptic Vanilla Mint Mouthwash Listerine Agent Cool Blue Plaque Detecting Rinse Listerine Original Antiseptic Mouthwash	Peridex Oral Rinse Toothpaste Aquafresh for Kids Aquafresh Sensitive Colgate Cavity Protection Colgate Fluoride Toothpaste for Kids Colgate Luminous Paradise Fresh Colgate Luminous Crystal Clean Mint Colgate MaxFresh Colgate MaxFresh Liquid Gel Colgate Sensation Sparkling White Baking Soda & Peroxide Stain Protection Colgate Sensitive Whitening Fresh Stripe	Colgate Sensitive Whitening Cool Mint Colgate Sparkling White Mint Zing Colgate Sparkling White Cinnamon Spice Colgate Sparkling White Vanilla Mint Colgate Total Colgate Total Advanced Fresh Colgate Total Advanced Health Colgate Total Advanced Health Gel Toothpaste Colgate Total Fresh Stripe Colgate Total Plus Whitening Colgate 2in1 Toothpaste and Mouthwash Whitening	Colgate 2in1 Kids Bubble Gum flavour Toothpaste and Mouthwash Colgate 2in1 Kids Watermelon flavour Toothpaste and Mouthwash Crest Baking Soda Crest Cavity Protection Regular Crest Complete Clean Mint Gel Crest for Kids Cavity Protection Sparkle Gel Crest Extra Whitening with Tartar Protection Clean Mint Crest Multicare Whitening Crest Pro-Health Clean Cinnamon Crest Pro-Health Clean Mint	Crest Sensitivity Protection Mint Paste Crest Tartar Fighting Toothpaste Sensodyne Toothpaste for Sensitive Teeth Sensodyne-F Baking Soda Clean Sensodyne-F Brilliant Whitening Sensodyne-F Cool Mint Gel Sensodyne-F FreshMint Sensodyne-F Mint Sensodyne-F ProName!l Sensodyne-F Revitalizing Whitening Sensodyne-F Ultra Fresh Tooth coating Prevora medicated tooth coating
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Advertorial

Your best regimen for oral health

The optimum regimen for maintaining healthy teeth and oral health for life is simple, as long as there are no major gum problems, says Toronto dentist Dr. Maryam Adibfar.

For starters, brushing your teeth at least twice a day is important, especially brushing before bedtime to ensure no food particles stay on teeth over night, explains Dr. Adibfar. "When you brush, it should be for two minutes at least," she says.

For many people, this seems like an impossible task, especially those who are used to brushing for one minute or less. "I time myself when I brush," says Dr. Adibfar, who recommends playing a favourite song while brushing to make the exercise feel like it's passing more quickly. "You're aiming for brushing a few seconds per tooth," she explains.

The next item in a sound oral-care regimen is flossing. Dr. Adibfar explains this is important for plaque removal and should be done once a day. Lastly, a checkup at your dentist's office should be done every six months to ensure everything is in order, and so your hygienist can remove any tartar buildup.

BEST BRUSHING TECHNIQUE

When it comes to brushing your teeth, the most important thing to remember is to brush away from the gums, explains Dr. Adibfar. Brush from the gum and down the tooth. This method will ensure the gum crevice, which is the area where the gum and tooth meet, is cleaned. It will also effectively clean each tooth. Dr. Adibfar is also an advocate of power toothbrushes.

"They are excellent," she says. "It's like getting a mini dental polishing." They are also helpful when reaching the two-minute brushing mark because your hand won't get as tired, she says.

CHILDREN AND ORAL HEALTH

A good oral-health regimen is also important for children, says Dr. Adibfar. For kids under 10, manual dexterity can be a problem, so she suggests replacing regular floss with a flossing device that has a handle. Children also need to brush at least twice a day for two minutes and see their dentist twice a year – just like adults.

It's important to get kids in the habit of flossing and sticking to a good oral-care regimen, so they can have healthy teeth and oral health for life, including avoiding tooth loss, says Dr. Adibfar. She says it's time to brush a child's teeth as soon as they start appearing. For the tiniest tots, parents can wipe their infant's gums with a soft cloth to remove any residue from milk or juice. Dr. Adibfar recommends parents take their child for his or her first dental check-up once the child's teeth have all come in.

ORDER COUNTS

When it comes to your oral-health care regimen, brushing your teeth after you floss is a much more effective method of preventing tooth decay and gum disease.

AN OPTIMAL ORAL CARE REGIMEN INCLUDES:

- Brushing at least twice a day
- Brushing for at least two minutes
- Making sure to brush before going to bed
- Flossing once a day
- Seeing your dentist for a checkup twice a year

Together we can help more Canadians keep their teeth for life!



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For every click, a contribution will be made to help more Canadians get access to dental care.*

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*While quantities last

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