# Home Hygiene Aids

The tools we recommend — and how to actually use them.

**QUESTIONS AFTER HOURS?**

Our digital care assistant is awake 24/7 — ask anything and get an instant, personalized answer, or have it routed to your provider. Visit **pugetsoundperio.com/ask** or scan →

**HOW WE THINK ABOUT IT**

Most adults under-clean between their teeth and over-scrub the gumline. The goal isn't more pressure — it's the right tool, in the right place, every day. Pick what fits your mouth and your routine.

## Toothbrushes

### Manual brushes

- **Nimbus Microfine** — our favorite ultra-soft brush after surgery and for sensitive gums.
- Any brush labeled **soft** or **extra-soft** works. Skip medium and hard.
- Replace every 3 months, or sooner if the bristles splay.

### Electric brushes

- **Oral-B iO series** — small round head, oscillating, with a built-in pressure sensor.
- **Sonicare DiamondClean / 9000 series** — sonic vibration, gentle on gums.
- Hold the brush still for 2–3 seconds per tooth — don't scrub. Let the brush do the work.
- After periodontal surgery or LANAP, wait 12 weeks before resuming an electric brush in the treated area.

## Cleaning between your teeth

This is the part most people skip — and it matters more than the brush you use. Pick the option you'll actually do every day.

### Floss

- Standard waxed floss for tight contacts.
- **Glide** or PTFE floss if your floss shreds.
- **Floss threaders** or **Superfloss** for under bridges and around implants.
- Use about 18 inches, wrap around your middle fingers, and hug each tooth in a C-shape — gentle up and down, not a sawing motion.

### Interdental brushes (Proxabrush, TePe, Curaprox)

- Better than floss when there's any gum recession or space between teeth.
- Match the brush size to the space — your hygienist will fit you.
- One pass per space, gentle in and out. Rinse the brush; reuse for about a week.

### Water flossers (Waterpik)

- Excellent for implants, bridges, orthodontics, and anyone who finds floss frustrating.
- Use **after** brushing and flossing/interdental brushing — not instead.

- See the **Using Your Waterpik** section below for technique and tip selection.
- Avoid in any surgical area for 12 weeks after periodontal or implant surgery.

### Tongue cleaning

- A simple stainless-steel tongue scraper, used 1–2 times a day, dramatically reduces bacterial load and bad breath.
- Pull from back to front 4–5 times, rinse, repeat. Don't push so hard you gag.

> **ORDER OF OPERATIONS**
>
> 1. Interdental brushes or floss first (loosens debris). 2. Brush — 2 minutes, soft pressure. 3. Tongue scraper. 4. Waterpik to flush everything out. 5. Rinse (or skip — see the Pastes & Rinses section).

Recommended Pastes & Rinses

# Recommended Pastes & Rinses

Picking the right toothpaste and mouthwash for your situation.

> **TWO-SECOND SUMMARY**
>
> Most adults do well with a **fluoride toothpaste**, no harsh whitening agents, and a **non-alcohol rinse** only when it serves a specific purpose. Skip the daily Listerine habit unless we asked you to use it.

## Toothpaste

**Daily fluoride paste**

- **Sensodyne Pronamel** — gentle on enamel, excellent for sensitivity, low abrasivity.
- **Crest Cavity Protection** or **Colgate Cavity Protection** — basic, effective, inexpensive.
- **Tom's of Maine Antiplaque** if you prefer a natural option (look for fluoride on the label).

**If you're cavity-prone (or have new crowns or implants)**

- Prescription-strength fluoride — **Clinpro 5000, Prevident 5000** (we'll prescribe).
- Use at night, brush, then spit but don't rinse — let the fluoride sit on your teeth.

**Sensitive teeth**

- **Sensodyne Rapid Relief** or **Sensodyne Repair & Protect** — use as your daily paste for 4 weeks before judging the effect.
- **Crest Pro-Health Sensitive** works similarly.
- Avoid whitening pastes while desensitizing.

**Whitening**

- OK in moderation if you have healthy enamel and gums.
- Avoid for 14 days after any periodontal surgery, gum graft, or LANAP.
- If you're using whitening strips or trays, alternate days with a sensitivity paste.

> **WHAT TO SKIP**
>
> **Charcoal toothpastes** — abrasive, no real evidence of benefit. **Heavy whitening pastes** in patients with gum recession or sensitivity. **Baking-soda-and-peroxide** pastes used daily long-term — fine occasionally, abrasive over time.

## Mouth rinses

**Daily rinses (only if you have a reason)**

- **Listerine Total Care Zero** (alcohol-free) — fine occasionally; can cause staining over time.
- **CloSYS** — neutral pH, no alcohol, no flavor. Great for chronic dry mouth.
- **ACT Anticavity** — fluoride rinse, useful if you're cavity-prone. Use at a different time of day from your fluoride toothpaste.

**Prescription rinse: Chlorhexidine 0.12% (Peridex)**

- We prescribe this around surgery, deep cleanings, and active gum infections.
- Use 2× per day for the duration we specify (usually 7–14 days).
- Causes brown staining with long-term use — don't continue beyond what we prescribe.
- Wait 30 minutes after brushing to use chlorhexidine — toothpaste deactivates it.

**Salt water — the underrated workhorse**

- 1 teaspoon of salt in a cup of warm water, swish gently for 30 seconds, 3–4× per day.
- Excellent for the first 1–2 weeks after surgery — soothing, mildly antimicrobial, no side effects.
- Free, gentle, and safe to use indefinitely.

> **WHAT TO SKIP**
>
> Alcohol-containing rinses for daily use — they dry out the mouth and can worsen sensitivity and staining. Hydrogen peroxide rinses daily — fine for occasional use, irritating long-term. Multiple medicated rinses stacked back-to-back — pick one, use it as directed.

Using Your Waterpik

# Using Your Waterpik

Get the most out of water flossing — especially around implants, bridges, and grafts.

> **VIDEO WALKTHROUGH**
>
> Watch the 3-minute Waterpik technique demo — tip selection, angle, and pressure:
> **https://www.pugetsoundperio.com/patient-education-videos/additional-waterpik-instructions**

## Why we like it

A water flosser flushes a pulsating jet of water between your teeth and just under the gumline. Compared to string floss, it cleans more effectively around **implants**, **crowns**, **bridges**, **orthodontic appliances**, and **deep pockets** — and many patients are far more likely to actually use it.

## When NOT to use it

- For **12 weeks** after periodontal surgery, gum graft, LANAP, or implant placement in the treated area.
- Right after a fresh extraction — the suction can disturb a clot.
- On the highest pressure setting if you have inflamed or bleeding gums — start gentle.

## Models we recommend

- **Waterpik Aquarius (WP-660)** — the workhorse countertop model. Reservoir lasts a full mouth.
- **Waterpik Cordless Advanced (WP-580)** — great for travel or smaller bathrooms.
- **Waterpik Sonic-Fusion** — combined brush and flosser if counter space is tight.

## Tips and which to use

- **Classic Jet** — everyday, healthy mouths.
- **Plaque Seeker** — implants, crowns, bridges, and around orthodontic brackets.

- **Pik Pocket** — soft rubber tip for guiding water into deep pockets gently.
- **Orthodontic** — built-in brush bristles for braces.
- Replace tips every **3–6 months** (or per the package).

## Step-by-step

1. Fill the reservoir with **warm** water. (Cold water makes sensitive teeth flinch.)
2. Choose your tip and start on the **lowest pressure setting**. Increase only if it feels comfortable.
3. Lean over the sink, place the tip in your mouth **before** turning it on, and close your lips loosely so water can drool out.
4. Aim the tip at a **90° angle** to the gumline. Pause for 1–2 seconds at each space between teeth.
5. Work systematically — start back-upper-outside, around to the front, then back-upper-inside. Repeat on the bottom.
6. Don't forget the **back of the last tooth** — most missed spot.
7. Total time: 1–2 minutes. Do it once a day, ideally at night.

## If you have implants

Use the **Plaque Seeker** or **Pik Pocket** tip on a **medium** setting. The tissue around an implant doesn't have the same fiber attachment as a natural tooth, so a gentle flush is much kinder than trying to floss aggressively. Aim around the implant collar and let the water do the work.

**PRO TIP**

Add a capful of **antimicrobial mouthwash (alcohol-free)** — *or* a capful of **plain household bleach** — to the reservoir 1–2× per week if you have deeper pockets or recurrent inflammation. Pick one or the other, never mix them. Rinse the unit with plain water afterward to keep it from clogging.

**BEFORE REACHING OUT TO YOUR PROVIDER**

Try our 24/7 digital assistant first — instant, personalized answers, or it'll route your message to your provider. **pugetsoundperio.com/ask** →

## Reach your surgeon directly

For non-urgent questions, **email is the fastest way** to reach your doctor. After-hours phone calls should be reserved for emergencies only.

| Doctor | Email | Direct line |
|---|---|---|
| **Dr. Kang** | drkang@pugetsoundperio.com | (425) 577-9570 |
| **Dr. Suzuki** | drsuzuki@pugetsoundperio.com | (425) 652-5283 |
| **Dr. Liu** | drliu@pugetsoundperio.com | (253) 642-7849 |
| **Dr. Cha** | drcha@pugetsoundperio.com | (916) 500-4464 |
| **Dr. Nordlie** | drnordlie@pugetsoundperio.com | (253) 561-2294 |
| **Dr. Ninneman** | drninneman@pugetsoundperio.com | (425) 647-3747 |

Everyone heals at their own pace. If something feels off or you just want reassurance, please reach out — it's a privilege to take part in your care. More instructions and videos: Patient Resources at **pugetsoundperio.com**.