

Dental Hygiene

According to the most current data on German dental hygiene, 88 per cent of women and only 72 per cent of men clean their teeth at least twice a day. Even though at least 71 per cent of the participants in the survey had experienced caries.

Nowadays, with such an abundance of dental care products, there is no excuse for not taking proper care of your teeth. Some people prefer electric toothbrushes to conventional ones and, in fact, approximately 75 per cent use an electric toothbrush. Another fact is that quite a few patients are afraid of going to the dentist because of negative experiences as a child. Unfortunately, most of us don't think of such things until our teeth start to cause us problems, and then we have to go to the dentist!

Male customer: Guten Morgen, sprechen Sie bitte Englisch?

PTA: Good morning, yes I do. How may I help you?

I had dental surgery yesterday and my dentist told me that I need to be careful for the next few days when it comes to dental hygiene.

Do you have stitches at the site of the operation?

Yes, I do.

Did your dentist recommend anything else that you should keep in mind during the recovery period?

To be honest, I didn't really take in everything that she was saying. The only thing I'm sure about is that I should rinse my mouth out with a lukewarm salt solution at least three times a day for the first 24 hours after the treatment.

Did you get on okay with that? Yes, I did.

Do you use an electric toothbrush or a conventional one?

I normally use an electric toothbrush. Do you think there is a difference between one and the other?

Apparently, one is just as effective as the other. When you can start with regular brushing again, I recommend using a toothbrush with a soft to medium head as your gums will probably be very sensitive for a while after surgery. Do you use mouth wash?

Yes, the one I normally use is from the local drugstore. Why?

Ready-to-use mouth wash solutions are okay, but after an operation, as you can't clean your teeth correctly, it is better to use a mouth wash containing chlorhexidine gluconate.

I'll take that, please.

What about your diet? Nutrition plays a part in recovering from dental surgery.

Are there foods that I should avoid?

Anything that can get stuck in or on your teeth. Things like popcorn, certain types of meat or vegetables such as spinach.

I don't really have any appetite at the moment. I'm just eating "soft" food.

What about smoking?

Now might be the right time to stop!

I can recommend these interdental brushes, for when you start regular oral hygiene again. They are great for cleaning the spaces between the teeth that are not reached during brushing.

Okay, I'll take a medium pack to start with.

What about tooth floss?

I have tried flossing, but it's hard to get used to.

Flossing has been proven to prevent the build-up of plaque, which is one of the major causes of dental problems.

I think I'll take the floss, too. I'd do anything to prevent having dental surgery again!

Here are your purchases. Get well soon. Bye.

Thank you, goodbye. ■

Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker

VOCABULARY

dental hygiene	Zahnhygiene
according to	gemäß
most current data	aktuellste Daten
dentist	Zahnarzt
surgery	Operation
stitches	(med.) Fäden
site	Stelle
keep in mind	beachten
rinse	spülen, ausspülen
treatment	Behandlung
apparently	anscheinend
gums	Zahnfleisch
mouth wash	Mundspülung
nutrition	Ernährung
tooth floss	Zahnseide
plaque	Zahnbelag
purchases	Einkäufe