



# Healthy Smiles for a Healthy Lifestyle

By Dr. Jeff Haddad

## Electric Toothbrushes... Are they worth it?

Does an electric toothbrush really clean your teeth better than a manual toothbrush? In the past, many dental experts said no. They maintained that if you brush for two minutes at least twice a day, floss and visit your dentist regularly, manual brushes and electric brushes are equally effective. However, recent studies suggest that powered toothbrushes with oscillating and rotating actions are more effective than manual toothbrushes in reducing plaque and gingivitis.

The majority of dental problems people experience including cavities, gingivitis, gum disease, and bad breath are caused by the presence of plaque or "bacteria that lives in the mouth." This bacteria gets more aggressive and harder to remove the longer it is left undisturbed. Therefore, it is essential for people to remove this plaque and break up these tenacious bacteria as effectively as possible. Studies show that electric tooth brushes have been shown to remove 11% more plaque, reduced gingivitis by 6%, and decreased bleeding of the gums, which is a sign of infection, by 17%!

The problem with any kind of toothbrush is that many people aren't dentally self-disciplined. **In fact, most research shows that most Americans brush for only 30 to 60 seconds, which is half the time recommended by dentists!** This isn't even enough time to enable the fluoride in toothpaste to work properly. So why is an electric toothbrush superior to regular manual brushes? Here are some of the main reasons:

### Electric Toothbrush Advantages

- The bristles of the electric toothbrushes move much faster than the human hand. The faster moving bristles, the more likely that plaque will be removed from tooth surfaces.
- A good electric toothbrush will have a timer that alerts you when you have been brushing for the recommended time of 2 minutes. Some even time you as you brush sections of your mouth.
- For children, compliance is a LOT better with electric toothbrushes because it can be "fun!"
- For anyone with dexterity problems (children, elderly patients, or anyone with physical or medical conditions), electric toothbrushes are often able to clean hard to reach areas more effectively.

### Recommendations for Electric Toothbrushes

- Oral-B Vitality (Price \$35) Rechargeable entry level electric toothbrush
- Oral-B ProfessionalCare 1000 (Price \$75) Rechargeable with pressure sensor that stops pulsations when brushing too hard.
- Sonic Care Flex Care (Price \$100, with UV Sanitizer \$120) Rechargeable. Includes a 2 minute timer and 30 second prompts so that quadrant of your mouth receives equal time. Ultraviolet (UV) Sanitizer built in to charging stand is available and a very nice feature for disinfecting your toothbrush head.

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*Dr. Haddad and Dr. Doolin lead a practice of 10 that focuses on cosmetic, implant and neuromuscular dentistry, as well as general dentistry for children and adults. For more information, please visit [www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com](http://www.rochesteradvanceddentistry.com) or call (248) 656-2020.*