

This allows for a thorough cleaning action and suppresses the gum from growing up excessively in between your teeth. Excessive growth can cause a natural food and plaque trap which leads to a self degenerating situation. (Most leading pharmacies stock interdental brushes, or visit www.piksters.com to view a list of Piksters stockists near you).

Please Note: All interdental brushes, toothpicks and sticks can put pressure on the tip of the gum, especially if you force it, or use a brush that is too big for the space. This can cause a slight re-shaping of the gum over time. This is generally good for back teeth but most people like the look of the small triangle of gum growing in between their front teeth. Therefore, use the smallest size possible around your smile area.

How to use Piksters correctly and avoid wire breakage:

- Choose a size that inserts without force. The correct size will fit easily.
- Do not bend the handle back and forth against the brush head when the brush is inserted.
- **Back teeth.** Use one finger to push the very tip of the brush head over to an angle of approximately 45°-90°. Pushing the tip will avoid a sharp bend where the plastic meets the wire and reduces stress and breakage in the metal.
- Insert the brush **SLOWLY** with a gentle twisting or wriggling action – this will ease the brush in so that the wire does not buckle.
- Do not straighten the brush after it has been bent more than a few times as this will stress the wire and increase chance of breakage.
- **Front teeth.** Insert the brush head straight in line with the plastic handle, using a gentle twisting or wriggling action.

CAUTION: If the brush head breaks and becomes caught between your teeth use one of the following methods to get it out and tilt your head forward and down so that the piece falls out of your mouth.

- 1) Use another brush to push out the broken piece but insert it from the opposite direction.
 - 2) Use a pair of tweezers to pull the broken piece out.
 - 3) Use a toothpick to push out the broken piece.
- If you cannot remove the piece, please contact your dentist.

How long do interdental brushes last?

Usually for several days or more but it depends on how hard you work them.

How do I look after them?

Like toothbrushes they are washed out and re-used until the bristles deteriorate or the wire has been bent several times. If you prefer, they can be disposed of after a single use.

Piksters interdental brushes have the following advantages:

- **Strong, stiff, plastic coated wire** – if you have used interdental brushes before you may notice a difference in the way Piksters do not buckle or bend as much as some, so you will get more uses per brush.
- **Nylon 612 filaments** – this is the highest grade of nylon filament available and as a result many patients report that the brushes last longer.
- **“Twisty” handle** – this allows the user to rotate the brush on insertion and assists its cleaning ability.
- **One piece design** – each brush head is fixed to the handle so the difficult and fiddly task of trying to replace brush heads is eliminated.
- **Hygienic** – every single brush has a cap which is open ended. This allows the bristles to dry out between uses and minimises the chance of bacterial growth due to humid conditions
- **Slim design** – Piksters are small enough to be kept in a pocket, wallet or purse without causing bulkiness, it’s always handy when you need it.
- **10 sizes** – the big variety of sizes means there’s one to cover any situation.
- **Economically priced** – Piksters cost less than other well known brands and they are sold in packets containing 7 and 10 brushes or even more economical packs of 40. We understand that interdental brushing is a necessity and needs to be affordable... that is the Piksters philosophy.

PIKSTERS ARE AN AUSTRALIAN OWNED PRODUCT

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How & Why you should use Interdental Brushes



Patient Education Brochure No. 13G
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What are Interdental Brushes and where are they used?

Interdental Brushes are small circular toothbrushes that you insert into the spaces between your teeth to clean the difficult to reach areas. Like floss only easier. They can also be used around orthodontic braces or splints and anywhere a toothbrush cannot reach.

But I brush my teeth...why do I need to clean the space between my teeth?

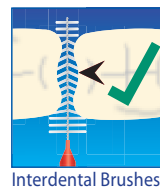
The space or gap between your teeth conceals about 40% of the tooth surface but it accounts for about 80% of the problems. By cleaning the gap you get a huge advantage in preventing decay and gum disease. The reason most X-rays are taken is to check for decay in the gap areas and to catch it early. By cleaning in the gap, you not only reduce your chance of decay, root canal treatments and crowns, but you substantially reduce your chance of serious gum and bone disease around the chewing teeth.

How often should I use Interdental Brushes?

Use them as frequently as you feel you need to, especially if you get food stuck between your teeth, but at least once a day when you clean your teeth in the evening. You can also apply toothpaste to the bristles before insertion for a super fresh feeling. Unlike a toothbrush you can keep an interdental brush in your pocket and use it in many situations – especially after meals where you can't access a bathroom or use a conventional toothbrush.

What about floss? How does it compare to Interdental Brushes?

The fact is that most people don't floss... probably because they find it too fiddly and awkward to use, but floss is an excellent way to clean the gaps between your front teeth, and if you already floss you should continue. The problem is that gum disease and decay between the back teeth is a much bigger problem than the front teeth... as evidenced by the millions of people who have missing back teeth but still retain the front ones. Interdental brushes address this very important issue and they can be used with one hand, which makes cleaning much easier. This also means they are more likely to be used. They are also better at cleaning the indents or hollows between the roots of your molars and pre-molars. These areas are called furcations. Floss forms a straight line across the top of



the furcation, whereas interdental brushes have bristles that spring out sideways to clean the hollows and the bristles also massage the gum line, promoting good oral health.

What happens if my gums bleed when I start using Interdental Brushes?

Do not be concerned. It will stop in a week or two. It is usually due to pre-existing inflammation in the gums which causes weakening of the blood vessels. The primary cause of this bleeding is insufficient 'plaque' removal which is due to ineffective brushing. Once you remove the plaque the source of the problem is removed, the gum will heal, toughen up and won't bleed when gently rubbed. Please speak to your dentist or hygienist if any bleeding continues as you may need professional guidance or assistance to correct the problem.

You also need to brush your teeth effectively. When you clean your teeth it is not the intention to simply make them look good. 'Cleaning' is an ineffective description of what you are trying to do. A more accurate expression is "the removal of toxic bacteria and congealed acidic material" because this is what plaque is. You may need to ask your dentist or hygienist to show you if you are really cleaning effectively. They can reveal the areas of plaque you may not know you have.

What is plaque and why is it so important to remove it?

Plaque is nearly invisible, sticky white paste that forms on the teeth and gums every day. Plaque harbours bacteria and when it is present for long periods, it has the ability to eat holes into teeth and severely irritate the gum, turning it from pale pink to a reddish colour.

If the plaque is not removed it hardens and becomes Calculus which cannot be dislodged with a toothbrush or interdental brush, and requires help from your dentist or hygienist who will use specialised equipment to remove it. If you ignore the Calculus, periodontal disease will follow.

What is periodontal disease?

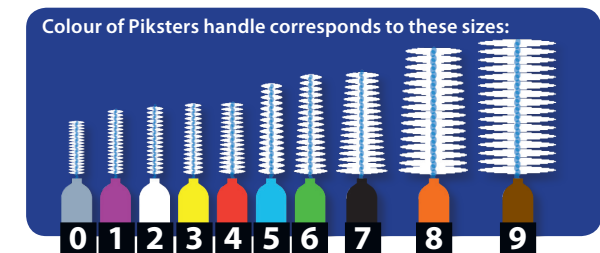
This is a condition in which the body sends in repair cells and bacteria attacking cells to try and heal the inflamed and infected area. Unfortunately these cells attack everything, including the bone which supports the teeth... and this leads to even bigger problems which eventually cause the tooth to fall out.

Many people do not know they have gum disease because the gum on the outside may look the same but underneath

and around the tooth an invisible space is created where more plaque and dangerous bacteria can be sheltered from the cleaning action of your normal toothbrush. These areas are called periodontal pockets. The deeper the pocket, the harder it is to stop it getting worse. A hygienist or dentist can measure the depth of these pockets and give you advice and specific cleaning procedures to help reduce them and they can monitor your progress. Corrective procedures may be advised by your dentist or hygienist and dependant on the severity of the condition the treatment will vary. The dentist may even suggest a gingivectomy which involves cutting away part of the gum to give you better access into the infected area. By using interdental brushes as part of your every day cleaning regime periodontal disease can be controlled or avoided as this condition is often irreversible.

Should everyone use interdental brushes or are they only for unhealthy or inflamed gums?

Interdental brushes should be used for daily plaque control on healthy teeth in conjunction with your normal toothbrush. They are also an excellent cleaning aid for those who wear braces or teeth that are splinted (wired together) e.g. orthodontic retention or periodontal support because they clean between the teeth and under the wires where it is hard to get floss. Implants also need special care, as do bridges. Plastic coated interdental brushes are very good for these areas as they can clean around the artificial teeth without damaging them and are quick and easy to use. Smokers and medically compromised persons should use interdental brushes every day as they are more prone to gum disease.



What size should I use?

Ask your dentist or hygienist what size/s they would recommend or buy a variety pack containing one brush of each size so you can experiment to see what size/s fits best. Insert the smallest size first and keep using a bigger size until the brush fits snugly between the teeth without forcing it.

