

5 tips to feed the smile of the bleeding disorders community

The European Haemophilia Consortium teams up with Professor Alison Dougall to share expert advice on maintaining good oral hygiene – a crucial step in preventing complex and invasive dental procedures for patients with bleeding disorders.



1 Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste

Brush for 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste morning and night to prevent plaque buildup, decay, and gum disease. People with bleeding disorders should use a soft manual or electric toothbrush—some electric brushes even have pressure sensors for extra care. Parents should start brushing their child's teeth as soon as the first tooth appears and continue to supervise until the age of 8. **Remember:** Healthy gums don't bleed—if you notice bleeding after brushing or on your pillow, see a dentist or hygienist.

2 Clean between your teeth first

Flossing or using interdental brushes before brushing removes bacteria and food debris, making brushing more effective at preventing gum disease, bad breath, and plaque buildup. Children should start around 7-8 years old. **Remember:** If you find flossing difficult, ask your hygienist for guidance.



3 Spit, don't rinse after brushing!

After brushing, spit out the toothpaste but don't rinse—rinsing washes away fluoride, which helps protect and strengthen enamel against decay. Fluoride is the most important ingredient in toothpaste, so let it work. **Think of toothpaste like sunscreen** – we wouldn't swim straight after applying cream!

4 Maintain a balanced and nutritious diet

A balanced diet, hydration, and healthy snacks strengthen enamel, protect gums, and prevent decay. Dairy products like milk, cheese, and yoghurt support strong teeth, while sugary, acidic, and processed foods should be limited. After consuming them, chew sugar-free gum or eat a cube of cheese to boost saliva and neutralise acids. Sports drinks are highly damaging due to constant sipping—water and milk are the best choices for hydration. **Remember:** Limiting sugar will not only prevent dental decay but also heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.

5 Keep your mouth hydrated

A dry mouth is a major cause of bad breath, as it allows food and bacteria to stick to the teeth, tongue, and palate, producing foul-smelling gases. Drinking water throughout the day keeps your mouth moist, washes away bacteria, and, in areas with fluoridated tap water, helps remineralise enamel and prevent cavities. **Remember:** Water prevents decay, freshens breath, dilutes acids, and keeps your smile strong!