

## **Christmas Gift - The Twelve Tips of Christmas!**

Christmas is a special time in Ireland and many of us will be hoping to spend more time with our families over the holidays. This means bathrooms will become busy places in many households. Some of our tips relate to the importance of good hygiene and toothbrushing which is something that you may not have thought about before. Why not have a chat about it and develop some new habits. And sure, who doesn't love a new resolution for the New Year!

### **1. Never Share Toothbrushes.**

**2. Wash Hands Before Brushing Teeth.** We know that the virus is transmitted by hands touching the face or mouth. However, we often forget to wash our hands before we brush our teeth. Develop a routine to wash hands—and then brush, floss, and wash face and hands. Don't forget to also wash your hands, and your child's hands, before brushing their teeth and keep their toothbrush clean.

**3. Clean Toothbrush After Brushing.** Rinse the Toothbrush in warm water after each use.

**4. Toothbrush Holders.** Toothbrush heads should never touch. Place toothbrushes standing upright in an open container after brushing, store brushes separately in individual holders like a glass/jam jar. Get children to mark their own name with an indelible marker. Don't place it down on a countertop or lie on the handbasin. Disinfect containers that hold brushes. Run toothbrushes containers through a complete dishwasher cycle or wash in warm water and liquid detergent. Put brushes in holders in a safe place. Store toothbrush away from the toilet. Flushing the toilet produces aerosols that can land on your toothbrush, so it is good practice to put the lid down on the toilet before flushing.

**5. Toothpaste.** If you are sharing a bathroom with the family, and to avoid cross-contamination from the toothpaste/toothbrush we recommend that you don't dispense the toothpaste directly onto your toothbrush but dispense it either onto the edge of a plate, so that toothbrushes don't touch each other or onto a clean piece of disposable kitchen towel – which can be disposed of afterwards.

**6. Practice Social Distancing Brushing your Teeth.** It's always a good idea to have one person at a time at the sink. Bacteria from your mouth enter the air as you brush your teeth. Stand back from others as you brush.

### **7. When should I change my toothbrush?**

Replace your toothbrush if you get sick and replace it with a new one when you recover from a viral or bacterial infection.

### **8. Contact your Dentist with Questions or Concerns.**

**9. Be Alcohol Aware.** While it is -‘ the Season to be Jolly’ - it’s also wise to pay attention to the quantity of your alcohol consumption.

The recommended weekly low-risk alcohol guidelines are less than:

- 11 standard drinks for women
- 17 standard drinks for men

Drinks should be spread out over the week with 2 to 3 alcohol-free days per week and no more than 6 standard drinks on any one occasion.

The less you drink the lower the risk of developing alcohol-related health issues.

Some examples of a standard drink in Ireland are:

- a pub measure of spirits (35.5ml)
- a small glass of wine (12.5% volume)\*
- a half pint of normal beer
- an alcopop (275ml bottle)

\*A bottle of 12.5% alcohol wine has about seven standard drinks.

**10. Eat More Fruit and Veg.** Christmas is a great time to try out new recipes using lots of fruit and veg.

Vegetables like brussels sprouts are cheap and cheerful and delicious roasted in the oven making them soft and sweet!

Get every bit out of your turkey and make some [stock from the bones](#) which you can then use to make a very easy [carrot and coriander soup](#).

**11. Keep Well Hydrated.** Keeping hydrated is important even in Wintertime and milk and water are the best drinks, including for your teeth. – water helps to rinse your mouth after eating, and milk to improve your calcium levels, which is essential for healthy teeth and bones.

If milk is good enough for Santa, it’s good enough for us!!

If you like your drinks frosty cold over Christmas avoid crunching the ice or you could end up with a fractured or broken tooth.

**12. Healthy Snacks.** Rudolf eats plenty of snacks on Christmas Eve, but even he knows that the best snacks between meals are things like carrot sticks and not sweets or chocolate. So, make sure to leave crunchy carrots sticks out for him and the other reindeer, and leave a few extra for yourself as well, to nibble on over the festive season!

*A Very Happy and Healthy Christmas to You All.*

*From, The Dental Health Foundation, HoHoHo!*

[www.dentalhealth.ie](http://www.dentalhealth.ie)