

Health | March 13, 2018 | By Lindsey Lanquist

Related Condition Centers

Oral Health

Do I Really Need to Brush My Teeth for 2 Minutes Twice a Day?

It feels like an actual eternity.



Justin Case/Getty Images

MORE FOR YOU

Some things feel like they're going to take *forever*, even if they actually won't take long at all. Think: standing in line the train to come when you make your dentist proud.

27 Healthy Eating Tips From Registered Dietitians For A Very Healthy New Year
oom when you really have to pee, waiting for and brushing your teeth for long enough to

Your dentist probably told you to brush your teeth for two minutes twice a day, no exceptions. Maybe you stick to that for a week or two after every appointment, then start to slack off. Hate to say it, but this 2-minute-twice-a-day rule isn't arbitrary.

Research shows that brushing your teeth is non-negotiable, but also that doing it for at least two minutes twice a day is great for your oral health.

This recommendation comes straight from the horse's experts' mouths: The [American Dental Association](#) (ADA) says you should be brushing for two minutes twice a day. But experts didn't just pluck this number from thin air—science shows it really can boost your [oral health](#), [Sally Cram](#), D.D.S, a periodontist based in Washington, D.C., tells SELF.

WATCH THIS

Strongest SELF Ever Challenge: Arms All Day



MORE FOR YOU

A 2016 systematic review of brushing fewer than two times a day, aka cavities, than brushing twice a day. These bacteria produce acid that eats away at your enamel, the hard outer covering on your teeth. They can also damage your gums and cause gingivitis, the first step in [gum disease](#) (aka periodontitis).

27 Healthy Eating Tips From Registered Dietitians
For A Very Healthy New Year
Research found that consistently associated with more tooth decay, aka **Tooth decay** happens thanks to plaque, a

Dr. Cram says some research gets even more specific, showing that brushing your teeth for two minutes leads to a greater reduction in plaque than brushing for one minute does. A 2012 systematic review of 59 papers published in *International Journal of Dental Hygiene* found that, on average, people who brushed for one minute removed about 27 percent of plaque. When people brushed for two minutes, they removed around 41 percent of the plaque on their teeth, so almost twice as much.

If you brush for fewer than two minutes twice a day, you might not be cleaning your teeth thoroughly.

While two minutes might seem like a long time, it helps ensure you're covering all the ground (or teeth) you need to, [Vera Tang](#), D.D.S., New York City-based dentist, tells SELF.

When you [brush your teeth](#), you're not just supposed to get the outside surfaces, as in, the front of your teeth and sides closest to your cheeks, Dr. Tang says. You're also supposed to get the inside surfaces—the backs of your teeth and the sides of your molars closest to your tongue. You're supposed to clean the chewing surfaces, too, along with the places where your teeth and gums meet.

If you're only spending, say, 45 seconds brushing your teeth, odds are you'll miss some of these spots or not give them enough attention, Dr. Tang says. That can allow plaque to remain and harden into [tartar](#), which simple toothbrushing can't remove. Your dentist will need to scrape it off, which is so enjoyable and fun for you, except it's not.

If you want extra credit, you can brush your teeth more than twice a day, but

MORE FOR YOU

it's usually not required for good oral health.

27 Healthy Eating Tips From Registered Dietitians
For A Very Healthy New Year
| Promoted Content |

Spending more than four minutes a day brushing your teeth isn't necessary for most people, Dr. Cram says. But there are some reasons you might want to. If you eat a lot of [sugary](#) snacks, it might make sense to spend more time brushing or to brush more frequently. If you have a history of gum disease, you might want to brush your teeth a little more, too. Same goes for if you have any kind of orthodontia that makes it harder to adequately clean your teeth.

But for the most part, the experts say, brushing for more than four total minutes a day is more of a bonus than anything.

During those four crucial minutes each day, make sure you're not harming your teeth or gums by brushing too hard.

Using OTT force when you brush can create little notches in your teeth or harm your gums, Dr. Cram says. Signs of over-brushing include tooth sensitivity, receding gums, or indents where the tooth meets the gum, [Lisa Simon](#), D.M.D., an oral health and medicine integration fellow at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, tells SELF.

Instead of brushing so hard you're basically punishing your mouth, gentle pressure with a soft-bristle toothbrush will suffice. And be sure to swap your toothbrush out for a new one every three or four months or if the bristles start looking frayed, the [American Dental Association](#) says.

As long as you're brushing your teeth twice a day for two minutes each time, you're doing a lot to keep your mouth healthy.

MORE FOR YOU

“Most dental problems—like tooth decay, gum disease, and other common problems—are really preventable,” Dr. Cra
 minutes to brush each day
 too.

27 Healthy Eating Tips From Registered Dietitians For A Very Healthy New Year
 how busy you are, you can spare four
 er minute or so to floss at least once per day,

With that said, maintaining oral health isn't just a matter of brushing your teeth and flossing. You'll still want to pay regular visits to your dentist and to reach out to them if you notice anything unusual. But at the very least, spending four minutes of QT with your teeth every day can go a long way in keeping your pearly whites, well...you get the idea.

Related:

- Dentists Explain 8 Ways to Make Your Next Appointment a Little Bit Easier
- How to Heal the Roof of Your Mouth After You've Burned It
- How Often Do You Really Need to Floss?

Keywords

Oral Health

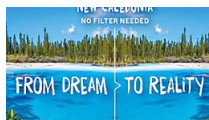
SPONSORED STORIES

Sponsored Links by



New Vision Discovery Is Leaving

SOLICITA HEALTH



Welcome To Paradise: A Stone's Throw

NEW CALEDONIA



Why Don't More Kiwis Know About

SMART INSURANCE QUOTES



Be in control of your cash flow this financial

XERO



Richard Branson Predicts the

EL AMERICAN



16 Amazing Facts about Mick Jagger's

WORK+MONEY

TRENDING

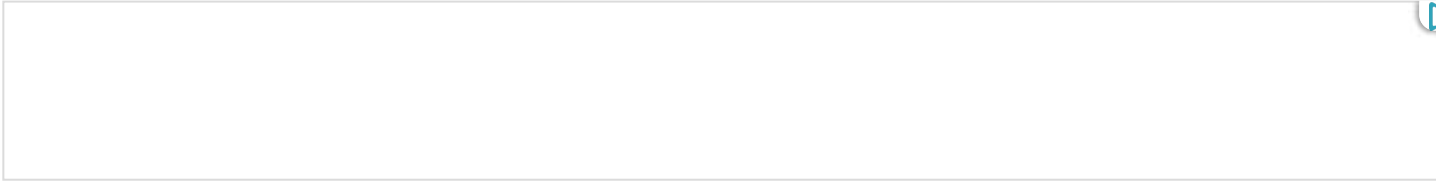
MORE FOR YOU



53 At-Home Bodyweight Exercises

27 Healthy Eating Tips From Registered Dietitians For A Very Healthy New Year

| Promoted Content |



April 2, 2018 | By Sarah Jacoby

Related Condition Centers

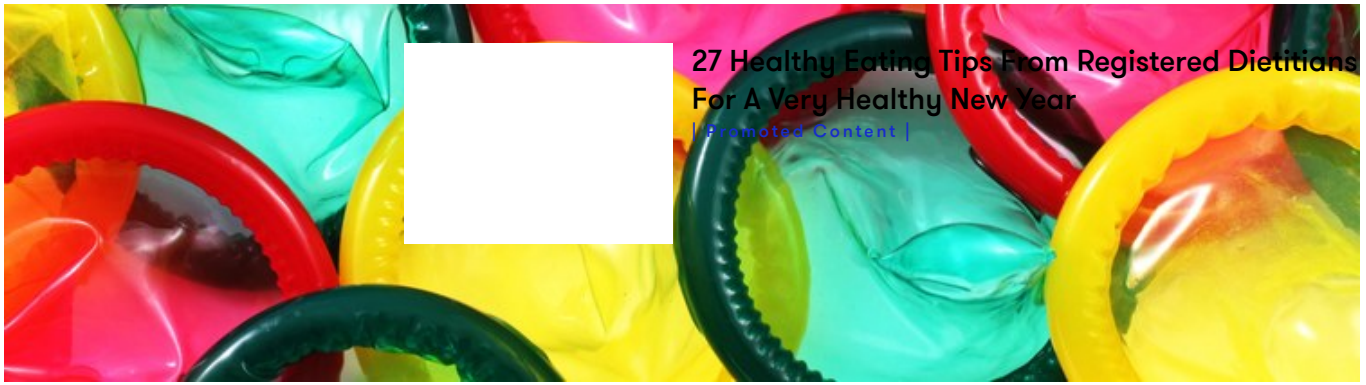
Allergies

Just in Case It's Not Obvious, the 'Condom Snorting Challenge' Is a Horrible Idea

Seriously, guys?



MORE FOR YOU



TethysImagingLLC/Getty Images

Having survived the (potentially lethal) **Tide Pod challenge**, the Teens have apparently moved on to their next E.R.-baiting stunt. So what are they up to now? Well, if you ask *Forbes*, they're **snorting condoms**, obviously.

Okay, they're not so much *snorting* as they are *shoving* condoms up their nostrils and pulling them out their mouths. Although this is not a new trend at all—videos of the challenge started popping up **in 2013** and have **enjoyed some infamy since then**—it is apparently still a Thing. And it's just as ridiculous as you think it is.

If you think this sounds like a recipe for clogged airways, sinus infections, and other health disasters, you are correct.

"I can't believe how stupid people are that they would want to do this. It blows my mind," Erich Voigt, M.D., clinical associate professor in the Department of Otolaryngology at NYU Langone Health, tells SELF. Your nasal passages eventually connect to your lungs and your esophagus, so sticking something up there that could get stuck in your nose—or travel further downwards—is a bad idea.

Dr. Voigt explains, "Nasal tissue is very vascular, spongy soft tissue," which means it's delicate and has a lot of blood vessels. So if the condom gets lodged in your nose or sinuses, it could lead to infection, bleeding, and irritation. The latex, lubricants, or spermicide that may be in the condom can also potentially cause allergic reactions in people that are sensitive to them, Jeffrey Suh, M.D., an associate professor of head and neck surgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, tells SELF.

Your troubles don't stop there: If the condom makes its way into your airways, it could become lodged in your lungs or your digestive tract. And if someone snorts in the

MORE FOR YOU

Dr. Voigt adds. This is the biggest danger with the challenge, he explains, as "It could potentially kill them." It could also lead to a lung infection in the lungs, Dr. Suh adds.

27 Healthy Eating Tips From Registered Dietitians For A Very Healthy New Year

| Promoted Content |

If the condom goes into the mouth, Dr. Suh says, it could travel to your stomach and then to your small intestine and large intestines, "and anywhere along this pathway it can get stuck and cause obstruction." If that happens, you may need surgery to remove it.

There's not a ton of concrete info about how often these worst-case-scenarios actually happen, but the *Forbes* column points to two case studies involving condoms: One report, published in 2004 in the *Indian Journal of Chest Diseases and Allied Sciences*, details the case of a 27-year-old woman who had a persistent cough and fever for six months. Doctors discovered she had accidentally swallowed a condom during oral sex and it had become lodged in her lungs (yikes). The other study, published in the *Journal of Medical Case Reports* in 2016, describes how a 26-year-old woman accidentally swallowed a piece of a condom that traveled to her appendix and caused inflammation. The condom scrap was removed via appendectomy.

So, although these kinds of incidents are rare, they do happen.

Let's say that someone (definitely not you) got something (definitely not a condom) stuck up their nose. What now?

The good news is that, despite the inevitable discomfort, most people will make it out of the condom challenge alive, Dr. Suh says. And, because the condom is longer than your nasal passage, you'll be able to see if it gets stuck outside your nose or if it's dangling in the back of your throat, which would make removal easier.

If it does get stuck, though, you'll need medical attention. If it gets stuck in your nose, you'll probably need to see an ear, nose, and throat specialist. This is not a particularly uncommon experience, especially with kids, Dr. Voigt says. In fact, he's seen a peanut, a cherry pit, and gum stuck up patients' noses. In those cases, doctors may be able to remove the object with a procedure in their office, or you may need surgery, Dr. Suh explains.

MORE FOR YOU

If you're having breathing difficulties, gastrointestinal issues, or an allergic reaction, you should call 911 for immediate

27 Healthy Eating Tips From Registered Dietitians For A Very Healthy New Year | Promoted Content |

So, as enticing (?) as the challenge is, it's truly not worth the potential for infection and, you know, ten times more likely than not, people will be okay," Dr. Suh says. "It's just completely gross and you're putting yourself at risk."

challenge is, it's truly not worth the potential for infection and, you know, ten times more likely than not, people will be okay," Dr. Suh

Related:

- The Internet Is Obsessed With the Idea of Eating Detergent Pods, But OMG Don't
- Here's Exactly How To Know If You're Allergic To Latex Condoms
- 14 Sneaky Condom Mistakes You Should Never Make

Keywords

Allergies, Respiratory Health, News

SPONSORED STORIES

Sponsored Links by



Doing This Before Bed Could Help

HEALTHNEWSTIPS.TODAY



The Flight Prices In New Zealand Are So

SAVE 70



Welcome To Paradise: A Stone's Throw

NEW CALEDONIA



Why Don't More Kiwis Know About

SMART INSURANCE QUOTES



Be in control of your cash flow this financial

XERO



Richard Branson Predicts the

EL AMERICAN

TRENDING

53 At-Home Bodyweight Exercises

MORE FOR YOU

27 Healthy Eating Tips From Registered Dietitians For A Very Healthy New Year

[| Promoted Content |](#)

Meet Inbox

Sign up for our Newsletter and join us on the path to wellness.

Will be used in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#)



NEW SELF Meal Plans

Easy-to-make Recipes. No Guesswork.

GET IT NOW

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

CAREERS

CONDÉ NAST STORE

SITE MAP

ABOUT SELF

MORE FOR YOU

ACCESSIBILITY HELP

TER SIGN UP
FEEDS

27 Healthy Eating Tips From Registered Dietitians For A Very Healthy New Year

| Promoted Content |

OUR SITES

© 2018 Condé Nast. All rights reserved. Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our User Agreement (effective 1/2/2016) and Privacy Policy (effective 1/2/2016). SELF may earn a portion of sales from products that are purchased through our site as part of our Affiliate Partnerships with retailers. Your California Privacy Rights . The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with prior written permission of Condé Nast.

CNWN Collection

MORE FOR YOU