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Three in five GB parents say children not brushing teeth long enough

Nearly three in five British parents with children aged 3 to 12 say their children brush their teeth for 1 minute 30 seconds or less – below the minimum 2 minutes recommended by dentists each time they brush, according to a YouGov survey of 1,000 parents conducted on behalf of Playbrush, makers of the unique interactive smart toothbrush that encourages children to brush by turning brushing into a fun game.

The survey found that 58% of parents with children between the ages of 3 and 12 said their children did not brush their teeth for the two-minute minimum recommended by the British Dental Association for each brushing session. A total of 40% of those asked stated their children did not brush longer than a minute, and 12% of parents said their children brushed for 30 seconds or less.

The survey is timed to coincide with the launch of the first electric Playbrush, the Playbrush Smart Sonic, at the IFA Berlin 2018 trade fair on Friday 31st August, and provides new insights into parental attitudes on children's tooth brushing habits on the day the NHS publishes its dental statistics for England in 2017/18.

Getting children to brush their teeth is a source of stress for many families, with 46% of parents agreeing that they have worried about their child's teeth as a result of trying to get them to brush. 24% of parents asked have lost their temper while attempting to get their children to brush, and 18% have been upset. 71% of those surveyed felt that technology could be used to achieve better oral health among children alongside traditional tooth brushing methods.

While 47% of parents asked said their children thought brushing was 'important', 40% said their children considered brushing to be 'boring'. The survey also asked about children's own efforts to avoid brushing, with 72% of parents saying their children had on at least one occasion tried different tactics. Methods employed to avoid brushing included crying (17%) or throwing tantrums (21%), saying they had brushed when they hadn't (50%), tried to bargain (21%) hidden themselves (13%) or hidden items for brushing such as the toothbrush or toothpaste (5%). Only 24% said their child had never done anything to avoid brushing their teeth.

The Smart Sonic edition out today marks the first time the Playbrush can be used with an electric toothbrush and represents a further step towards getting children to become enthusiastic brushers. The Playbrush connects to the toothbrush and transforms the brush into a game controller, motivating children to brush regularly, longer, and with greater accuracy, and is already achieving significant improvements in brushing times and effectiveness among existing users. The Playbrush app allows children to track progress on the games, and parents to monitor their child's tooth brushing habits and dental health.

Paul Varga, CEO of Playbrush, said: "We commissioned this survey because the high rate of oral decay among children and adults is a serious concern for dental professionals in the UK, and we wanted to find out more about why so many kids are not brushing properly. The results confirmed what we suspected – that tooth brushing is often a stressful time for both kids and parents, and the fact so many are not brushing for the minimum time recommended by the professionals can have serious consequences in later life.

"I found this to be the case in my own personal experience, and this gave me the idea for Playbrush. My own godson absolutely hated brushing his teeth. His mother tried to encourage him with brushing YouTube videos, but as we expected, he would get

distracted and simply forget to move his toothbrush around his mouth. And we thought, how can we encourage him to move his toothbrush? And that's where the idea of connecting toothbrushes with mobile games came about - combining fun and dental health."

Leading dentist Katrina Clarke said: "As a general dental practitioner for 40 years, I understand the importance of establishing a good, daily oral hygiene habit from an early age. PlayBrush uses the best of modern, interactive technology to help motivate and educate children to achieve this. With the introduction of the new 'PlayBrush Smart Sonic', whether your child likes a manual or electric toothbrush, I recommend PlayBrush to turn the daily tooth brushing chore into a fun experience."

Paul Ashley, Head of Paediatric Dentistry at the Eastman Dental Hospital, says of Playbrush "It is important that children learn the right brushing technique early. Playbrush is a great way to encourage teeth to be cleaned regularly, at the right speed and area of the mouth".

Both the Playbrush Smart and Smart Sonic are now backed by consumer goods giant Unilever in the UK with the name Signal Playbrush, replicating co-branding success seen in Germany, France and Austria under the Signal and Mentadent tooth brushing brands. They also received nationwide coverage in the UK from their appearance on the Dragons' Den, turning down offers from 4 of the 5 dragons.

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. For all media enquiries or a full copy of the survey please contact Dominique Fourniol on 07999 877 413, dfourniol66@gmail.com, or John Lightfoot, Business Development Manager at Playbrush, 07954586166, john@playbrush.com. For more information about Playbrush please visit www.playbrush.com
2. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4251 adults of which 589 were parents with children aged 3 to 12. Fieldwork was undertaken between 17th - 19th August 2018. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

ABOUT PLAYBRUSH

1. Playbrush was founded in 2015 by Paul Varga, Matthäus Ittner and Tolulope Ogunsina and is based in Vienna and London. Paul first had the idea for a smart toothbrush after observing the reluctance of his godson Louis to brush his teeth. Playbrush is an interactive smart toothbrush that connects via Bluetooth to a smartphone or tablet, so children can play fun games with their own tooth brushing movements, collecting rewards and detailed feedback with every brush. It is available as a manual toothbrush attachment or as an electric toothbrush.
2. Playbrush is available in 25 countries, and 175,000 have now been sold worldwide. Playbrush has signed co-branding partnerships with Unilever in Germany, Austria, France and the UK. Playbrush completed a successful crowdfunding campaign in 2015 and by 2017 had received a further seven-digit seed round investment. Playbrush was featured on the BBC's Dragon Den series in February 2018, and was offered funding by four of the Dragons. The award-winning young company is supported by University College London, the Eastman Dental Hospital and renowned dentists in the UK and Austria. Playbrush received a Gamification World Award 2015 and the Health Media Award in September 2016.