

Supercharge your routine

Patient education, motivation and ethical sales are key skills in the role of a dental nurse. **Anna Middleton** looks at the need to stay up to speed with the latest electric toothbrushes on the market

With an estimated 3.5 billion electric toothbrushes sold worldwide last year (www.reference.com/health/many-toothbrushes-sold-annually-31d26f6fdc981cf4), the market is continuously growing – with plenty of choices at a variety of prices. With that in mind, I regularly scan the dental aisles in various shops to keep up to date with what's on the market. It's also where I usually meet a poor soul, scratching their head whilst trying to work out which electric toothbrush they should buy. I take mercy on them and step in to offer my expert opinion. Let's break down some points.

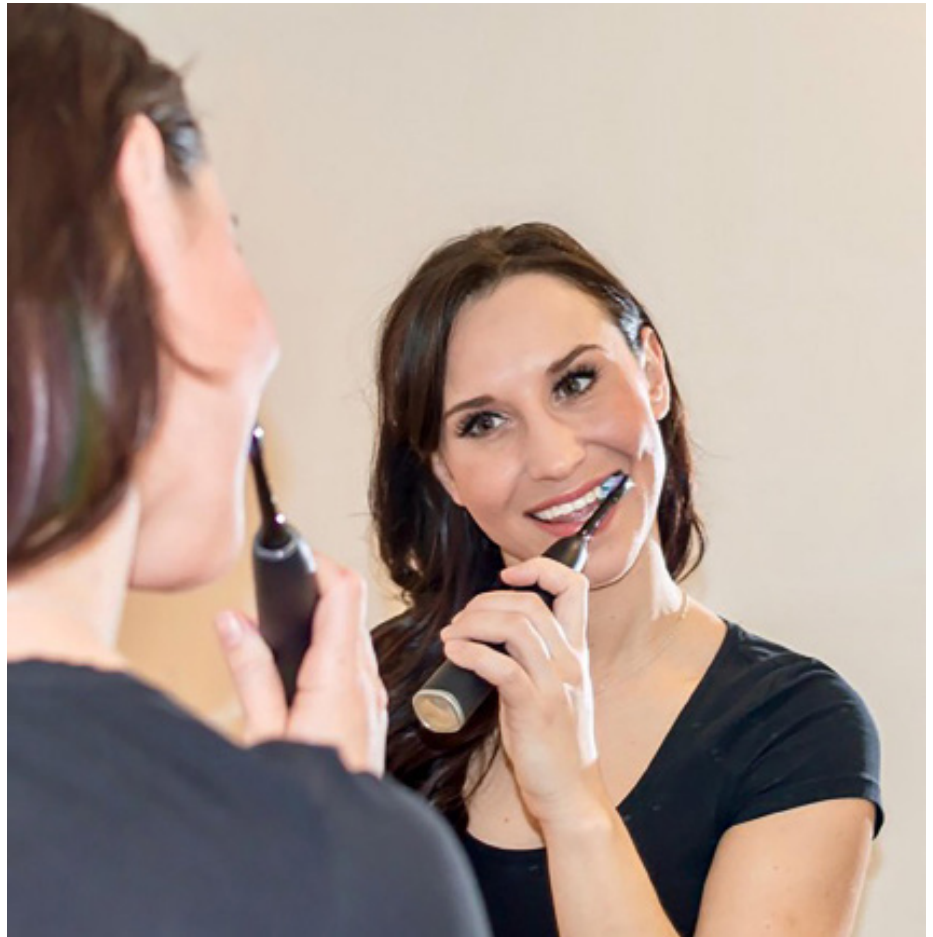
Types of brushes

There are several different mechanisms but, to keep it simple, the two leading types are rotary/oscillating heads and sonic vibration heads.

Rotary/oscillating heads are small and round, rotating in one direction and then the other, one tooth at a time to *sweep* plaque away. Often these heads pulsate, too.

Sonic heads *vibrate* at certain high speeds and frequencies to break down plaque as well as agitate the toothpaste and fluid in the mouth to clean between teeth and along the gum line.

Which is more effective? Both will remove more plaque than a manual toothbrush but, in clinical trials, sonic brushes removed significantly more plaque and are therefore



more effective (The Journal of Clinical Dentistry Vol. XXVIII, No. 1, Spec. Iss. A)

Why should patients go electric?

Advise your patients that they will get a far more superior clean and effective plaque removal because there are more brush strokes per minute than they could ever generate themselves with a manual brush.

Using an electric brush, with the correct technique, will prevent overbrushing, which causes the irreversible and permanent wearing away of the gums – or recession. Explain that the exposed underlying tooth surface is not as strong as the tough outer

enamel, leaving it more susceptible to further wear, dental decay, sensitivity and an unpleasing aesthetic appearance. When discussing toothbrushing options, it is as important to talk about impact on function, as it is the aesthetics of a smile.

Electric toothbrushes have much smaller heads and are designed specifically to ensure each tooth is cleaned individually, helping patients get to all the hard-to-reach areas. An electric toothbrush can also help people with reduced dexterity, enabling the person to brush more effectively.

ProtectiveClean

Last year, I was fortunate enough as Philips



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key opinion leader to be involved in the launch of their brand new brush – the Sonicare ProtectiveClean. The new range incorporates Sonicare's patented technology – 31,000 brush strokes per minute, which creates dynamic fluid action and drives the fluid in the mouth (toothpaste and saliva) deep between the teeth, delivering users a gentle, yet effective clean for healthier gums.

Key features

Designed to make good oral health more accessible, the ProtectiveClean range has options to suit different price points and includes features recommended by dental professionals and preferred by patients.

- Removes up to seven times more plaque than a manual toothbrush
- Removes seven times more plaque in hard to reach areas than a manual toothbrush
- Improved gum health in just two weeks
- Brush head replacement reminder using BrushSync technology which tracks brush head effectiveness based on brushing time and pressure, and alerts users when it is time for a replacement
- Pressure sensor that provides real-time feedback so patients will adopt softer touch to protect teeth and gums
- Long battery life providing two weeks of twice daily use from a full charge.

4300 vs 6100

4300 – This model includes one in-built cleaning mode, with two intensity settings, high and low to provide users with a tailored clean. The handle comes with an Optimal Plaque Defence brush head and charger.

6100 – This model includes three cleaning modes; clean, gum care and white, and three intensity settings; high, low and medium. The brush also includes an additional two BrushSync features to provide users with a tailored clean. The handle comes with two Optimal White brush heads, travelling case and a charger.



Trialling the new brush

To support the launch, I worked with Dr Ben Atkins, clinical director of Revive Dental, to collect patient

feedback and experience of using the new Philips Sonicare ProtectiveClean. Collating user feedback and results from more than 50 previous manual toothbrush users over a four-week period, we found improved patient engagement with brushing, better brushing technique and a better clean when using ProtectiveClean.

We all know prevention is key. Oral hygiene is crucial to patient care in order to prevent dental decay and gum disease. A power brush that provides the most effective plaque removal is vital in delivering the highest level of prevention. The patient also needs to like the product in order to secure compliance, which will then lead to long-term results.

Feedback

Patients say they really like the deep clean feel. They felt their teeth were cleaner than any brush they had used before and liked how their teeth felt smooth all day.

They liked they could access all areas of their mouth, too – especially the wisdom teeth – and the brush head that suited their preference. They found the brush easy to use.

Patients noted an improvement in the shade of their teeth and commented on their improved gum health and how previous bleeding had now stopped.

Further research

It was a great exercise to show patients that electric brushes are better than manual toothbrushes and educate them about the benefits of switching.

Philips has now recruited 1,000 manual toothbrush users from 100 dental practices across the UK to understand the impact of Philips Sonicare ProtectiveClean on patient behavioural change and in achieving good oral hygiene.

The Philips Sonicare ProtectiveClean toothbrush is proven to reduce gum disease by up to 100% and remove up to seven times more plaque than a manual toothbrush for improved oral health. The toothbrush uses unique technology and a sonic sweeping motion to create gentle microbubbles for an exceptional clean feeling.

For more information, visit www.philips.co.uk/sonicare

Tips on advising patients how to use the brush

All tooth-brushing requires good technique to get the most effective clean. Below, I share my approach to explaining to patients how to brush with an electric toothbrush.

Getting started Apply a small amount of fluoride toothpaste about the size of a small pea before switching the toothbrush on.

Positioning of the bristles Place the toothbrush bristles against the teeth at a 45-degree angle towards the gum line. Often, we just brush the teeth, but it is important to include the gum line because this is where the plaque will sit. Glide the brush across your teeth and gums gently, allowing the brush to do all the work – do not scrub.

How to hold the brush Hold the handle with a light grip. Hold gently at the edges and only apply light pressure.

And don't forget to brush those tongues! Up to 80% of bad breath comes from odour producing bacteria that accumulate and hide deep within the porous surface of your tongue. Almost half of our oral bacteria live on—and in—the deep crevices of our tongue (Danser et al, 2005). How many of us, as DCPs, have considered discussing the importance of tongue cleaning? Products on the market include tongue scrapers that are long, thin, flat piece of metal that has been formed into a U-shape. To scrape your own tongue, stand in front of a mirror, hold the two ends of the scraper in both hands, stick out your tongue, and place the scraper as far back on you tongue as possible. With firm, but gentle pressure, scrape the surface of the tongue in one long stroke, moving from the back of your mouth to the tip of your tongue. Or they can try the Philips TongueCare+ attachment head, which used with the BreathRX spray, can achieve long-lasting fresh breath.

Timing is everything. Use the electric toothbrush once in the morning and again at night-time for two minutes and remember to change the brush head every three months.

Spit, don't rinse. Spit the toothpaste out but try not to rinse your mouth afterwards, as you will wash away the beneficial ingredients in toothpaste, such as fluoride, which helps to prevent dental decay.