



## Australian Women's Health May, 2020

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CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

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# Tooth Display

From hi-tech brushes to green dentistry (yes, really) sink your teeth into the exciting new world of dental health

By Erin Docherty Photography by Steven Chee

Let's be honest: when you think of new trends, the dental world probably isn't the first thing that comes to mind. That's why you might be surprised to know that it's actually one of the fastest-growing sectors of beauty. The Australian oral care market was valued at \$2.2 billion in 2017 and is expected to grow in the next five years. But, with new innovation in almost every realm of oral care, it can be hard to keep up. So, floss up and settle in while we help you brush up (#sorrynotsorry) on what's in store for your mouth.

## Holistic Dentistry

Thought seeing the dentist was just about polishing your chompers or straightening a crooked smile? It goes way beyond that, since the health of your mouth, teeth and gums affects your *entire* body. "You really cannot be considered to be healthy without a healthy mouth," says Dr Lewis Ehrlich from Sydney Holistic Dental Centre.

Introducing holistic dentistry: essentially a practice that not only

focuses on the teeth and gums, but also the person attached to them. This movement considers your diet, lifestyle, general wellbeing and other things you might not think of as being related to the health of your teeth, including sleep and workouts.

Dr Helen Voronina from Dr Helen's Dental & Implant Studio in Victoria says, "Oral diseases can affect cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and neurological health. The mouth is often the first indicator of mortality-causing diseases and the safest area to treat to improve whole-body wellness."

It all starts with the food you put in your gob, says Dr Steven Lin, functional dentist and author of *The Dental Diet*. According to Lin, supporting the good bacteria in your mouth can help improve everything from your sleep and the quality of your exercise to your gut health. How to do that? Things you already know, like eating probiotic and natural fibre-rich foods. "Good types of [bacteria] love a mixture of vegies and fibre," Lin says. Meanwhile, crunchy foods like nuts encourage the production of saliva and can reduce the risk of tooth decay. Also look for foods high in vitamins A, D, E and K, as these little heroes serve up teeth-strengthening minerals such as calcium and phosphorus.



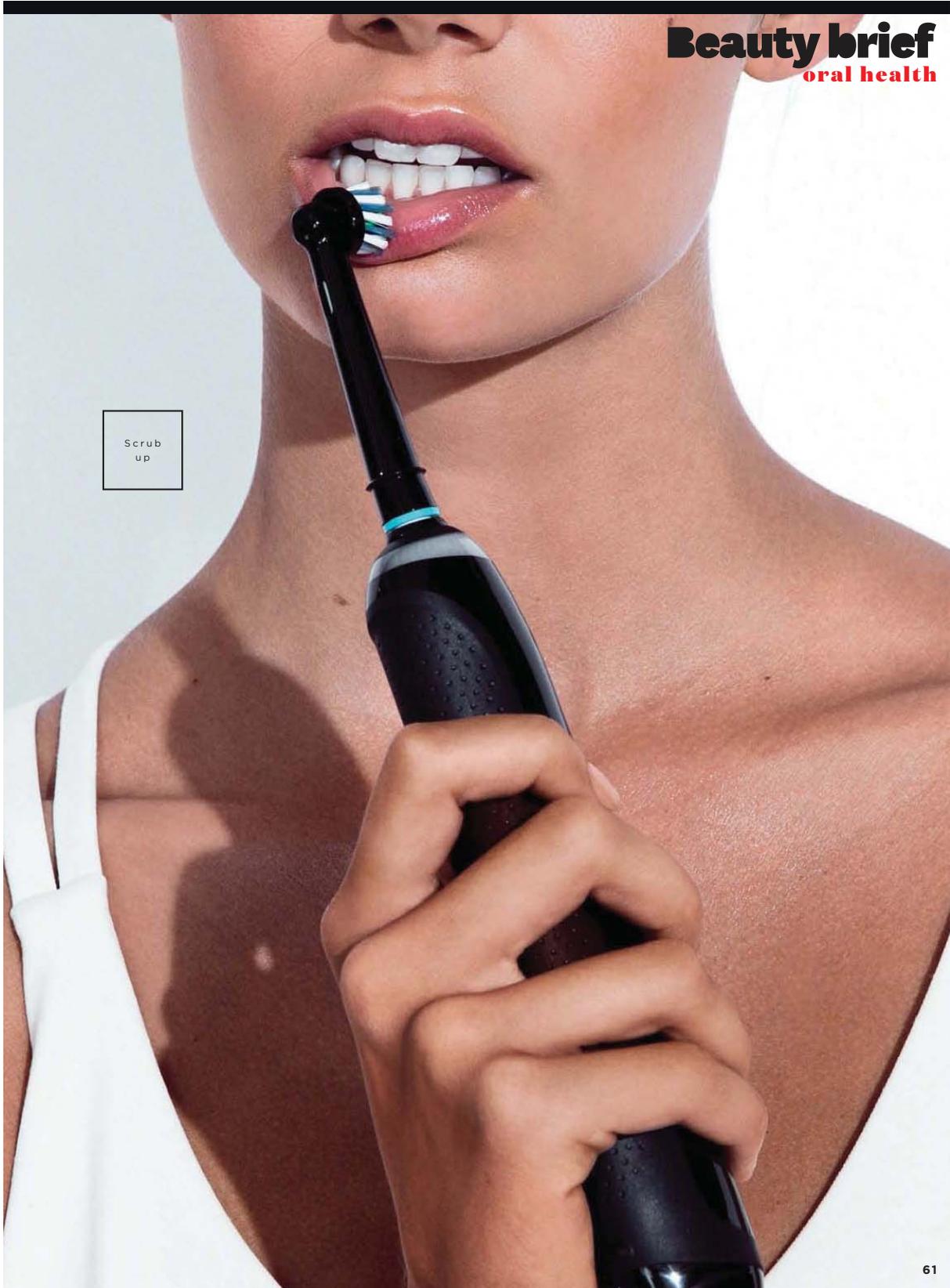
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**Beauty brief**  
oral health

Scrub  
up



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## Green Dentistry

It's not just your skincare that's making the eco-friendly move – the dentistry world is doing its bit as well. "The dental industry contributes to a lot of waste," says Ehrlich. "For example, in Australia alone, approximately 30 million toothbrushes go into landfill every year."

But it's about striking a balance between sustainability and effective care. Dr Aodhan Docherty from About Smiles adds, "Our patients' safety is the number one priority and as part of that we must follow guidelines for cleaning and protection. However, a side effect of such strict control is wastage of a lot of plastic and paper. So, these days we are constantly looking out for new options for recyclable materials and products that still maintain those safety standards."

A new wave of eco-friendly dentists are trying to solve this problem by switching to reusable metal instruments, ditching plastic barriers for disinfectant and using environmentally friendly sterilisation.

You can also help out and do your bit at home (go, you good thing!) by opting for bamboo toothbrushes over disposable plastic ones. Bamboo is a fast-growing resource and fully biodegradable (just pull out the nylon bristles when you're done and throw it in the compost bin), so it's more planet-friendly than its plastic cousins.

## Alt Toothpastes

With creative new flavours and packaging that you could easily confuse for a pricey hand cream, toothpaste has gone luxe. Not only

Lovebyt bamboo toothbrushes, \$18 (for two)

These are entirely biodegradable and feature soft, charcoal-infused bristles. They also come in a cute-as-canvas bag.



do they look good enough for the 'gram, but many boast a 'natural', fluoride-free ingredients list.

Wondering why there's such a sudden hate of fluoride? Well, in the past few decades, concerns have emerged (outside of the dentistry world) that excessive exposure to fluoride may be linked to health issues, so people have started seeking alternative options. But, according to Docherty, it's pretty clear cut: "We know that, without question, fluoride in the appropriate dosage significantly reduces the rate of decay." This means if you're not getting your fluoride through other means (like drinking enough tap water), toothpaste that contains it is the best way to significantly decrease the rise of cavities.

What about all those brands working with activated charcoal? Well, we hate to be the bearer of bad news, but according to a review in the *British Dental Journal*, the wellness ingredient *du jour* actually provides little protection against tooth decay, and may actually do more harm than good. Docherty says, "Charcoal can be fairly abrasive to teeth – it's like rubbing

sand on glass, you get lots of little scratches forming. If you are using charcoal in toothpaste, look up the RDA value [which indicates how abrasive a toothpaste is] and ensure it's on par with normal toothpaste. If what you're using is higher, it may be damaging your teeth." Yikes.

Ehrlich suggests, "Before making a switch to these products, you need to be assessed by your dental health professional. They know your history, decay risk, nutritional habits and oral hygiene routines best."

## Mouth Tech

The next generation of smart toothbrushes make brushing your teeth – dare we say it – fun. Not to mention easy and efficient. Some are even now using artificial intelligence (AI) to assess your brushing style, giving pointers on how to



Foreo Issa 2, \$235

Not only do these brushes add a bit of colour to your bathroom, but they feature sonic pulse technology for a gentle yet effective clean.

# \$38 billion

What the global toothpaste market was valued at in 2018 – and it's expected to reach more than \$50 billion by 2024.

SOURCE: MARKETWATCH



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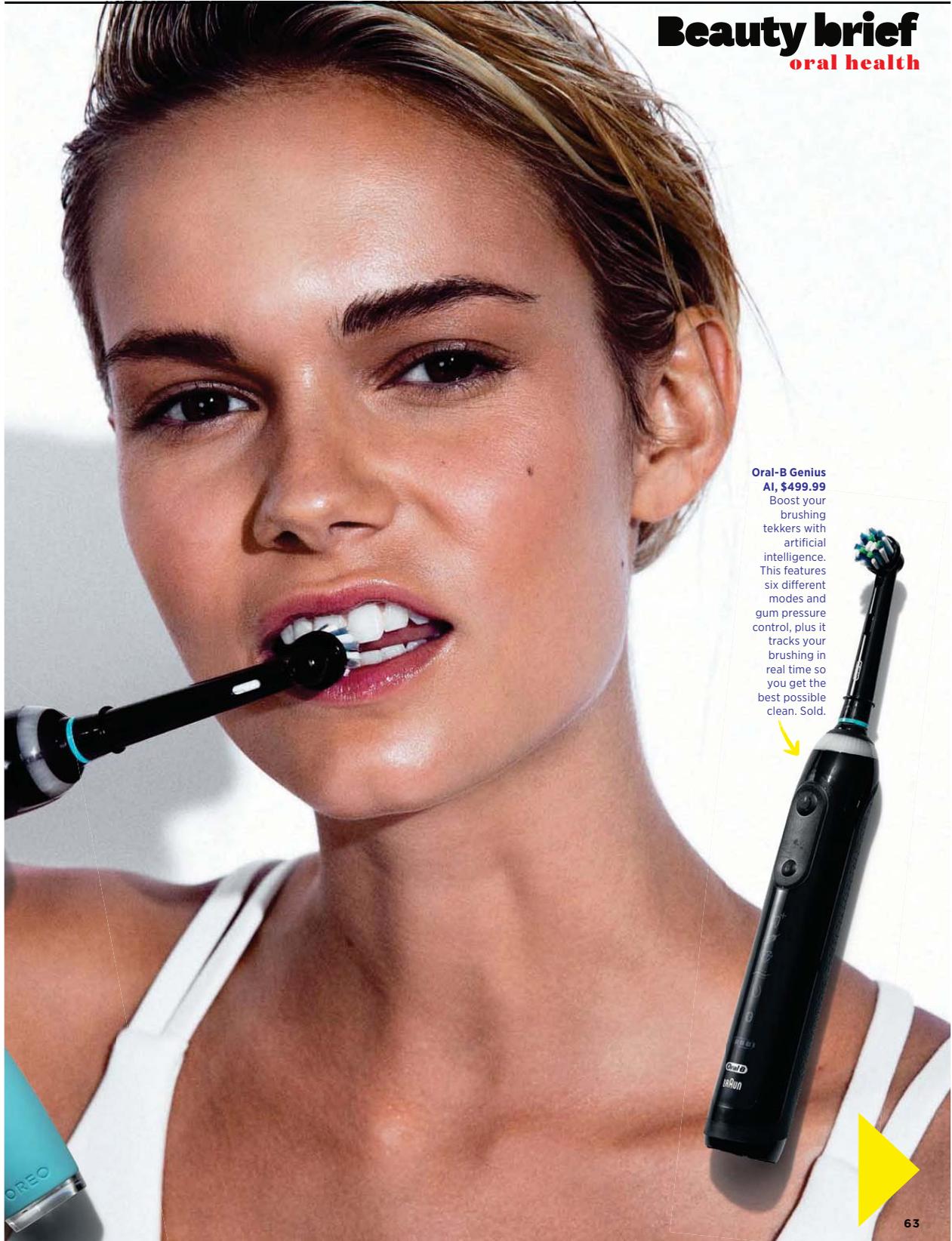
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## Beauty brief oral health

### Oral-B Genius AI, \$499.99

Boost your brushing tekkers with artificial intelligence. This features six different modes and gum pressure control, plus it tracks your brushing in real time so you get the best possible clean. Sold.



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## Beauty brief oral health

improve your technique. We're not freaking out, you're freaking out! OK, we're all freaking out.

Brands such as Oral-B are launching smart brushes that can do *everything* (disclaimer: may not walk the dog). These AI-powered newbies work by connecting to an app on your phone via bluetooth, and using in-built sensors to tell you when you're applying too much pressure, or not brushing long enough in a certain spot (FYI: their research found up to 80 per cent of us miss areas of our mouths when brushing). The app then takes this data and uses an algorithm to tell you where you need to brush better, before giving a rating of your overall dental hygiene (#brushshaming).

If you're not prepared to splash out and spend big bucks on a toothbrush, rest assured that your plain old manual brush can still do the job. "It depends on which works best for you. Electric brushes are great for 'overbrushers' who are damaging their gums, while manuals do a perfect job if used correctly," says Lin.

### Next-Level Teeth Whitening

The global teeth whitening market is valued in the billions and continues to rise. But these days the array of products is mind-boggling – from DIY LED-whitening kits to mobile teeth whitening and everything in between. So, what's actually legit?

Australia tightened the regulations and cracked down on DIY and salon whitening a few years back. "A lot of the 'trend' whitening agents left on the market aren't actually effective," explains Voronina. "Many just dehydrate the teeth, which makes them look very white but only lasts a short time. Eventually the teeth rehydrate and go back to their natural shade." Oh.

Not only do they not contain a high enough concentration of hydrogen peroxide to change the colour of your teeth, but less-than-professional approaches can also be pretty dangerous, warns Ehrlich. "I have seen so many cases of salon and DIY whitening go wrong, with

irreversible burns to the gums. This is a technique-sensitive procedure, using a potent chemical. For the best results and safety, I would always advise going to a trained dental health professional and staying away from the gimmicks."

While an in-chair whitening treatment costs more, dentists have access to the strongest concentrations for the best (and safest) results. Docherty explains, "[We use] very high-strength peroxide to bleach the teeth, and expertly place protective barriers to prevent damage to the gums, cheeks, lips and other areas. In my clinic, it's often used in conjunction with custom at-home whitening." A whiter smile coming right up! **wh**



**Lovebyt Cinnamon & Clove, \$19.95**  
This all-natural, vegan toothpaste is uber gentle on sensitive teeth. Oh, and iconic Australian artist Bruce Goold designed the packaging.

**Marvis Whitening Mint Toothpaste, \$15.95**  
Not only is this Italian-born toothpaste really, really, *ridiculously* good looking, but it also contains fluoride to help fight plaque and tooth decay, while leaving you with a taste of cool mint for lasting freshness.

**Aēsop Toothpaste, \$15**  
With a hint of mint, anise and spice, this gem contains all-natural ingredients such as sea buckthorn and cardamom, and will leave your mouth feeling cleansed and refreshed post-brush.

Pimp Your Sink

STILL-LIFE PHOTOGRAPHY: EDWARD URRUTIA