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THE TOOTHPASTE AISLE ALWAYS HAS SOMETHING NEW. WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS?

RON, HOUSTON, TX

It depends on what you're looking for, Ron—toothpaste that merely cleans your teeth is passé. "Companies are trying to cash in on the buzz about how good oral hygiene can help you fend off a host of health problems, including heart disease," says Kenneth Young, D.D.S., a private-practice dentist in New York City and *MH's* dentistry advisor. "This has led to increasing specialization in toothpaste." In fact, a staggering 67 new toothpastes hit store shelves last year alone. To help you choose a tube that's right for you, we checked with a panel of dentists, including Dr. Young; Mark Schlesinger, D.D.S., a clinical associate professor of dentistry at New York University; Paul Levi, D.M.D., an associate clinical professor of periodontology at Tufts University school of dental medicine; and Jennifer Jablow, D.D.S., a Manhattan-based cosmetic dentist.



SENSITIVITY

Most sensitivity formulas contain 5 percent potassium nitrate, which blocks receptors that translate hot and cold signals into pain. We like **Sensodyne ProNamel iso-active** (\$5) because it's also pH balanced to help prevent acid erosion. To maximize the pain blocking, says Dr. Schlesinger, spit after brushing, but then wait 20 minutes before rinsing.



GUM HEALTH

The best way to kill the germs that cause gum disease is to use a toothpaste with the antimicrobial triclosan, such as **Colgate Total** (\$4.50). In a University at Buffalo study, it out-gunned a stannous fluoride product. Just brush at a 45-degree angle, says Dr. Levi. This helps the bristles reach up under your gum line, where bacteria burrow.



ALL-AROUND

Only one brand, **Crest Pro-Health** (\$4), is accepted by the American Dental Association in six categories. It whitens, reduces sensitivity, and helps prevent cavities, gingivitis, plaque, and bad breath. One caveat: Its stannous fluoride can cause tooth staining. If you notice brown spots, alert your dentist, who can easily remove them.



NATURAL

Go natural to avoid artificial flavors and colors, but make sure the brand you choose has cavity-fighting fluoride. **The Natural Dentist Anticavity** (\$6) has fluoride as well as xylitol (which makes plaque less sticky) and aloe vera (an inflammation fighter). Plus, it's free of sodium lauryl sulfate, a foaming agent that may cause canker sores.



WHITENING

Most whiteners are not powerful enough. For real results, pick a product with hydrogen peroxide, such as **Supersmile Professional Whitening System** (\$36, supersmile.com). Bonus: Two tubes keep the toothpaste separate from the whitening gel, the best way to maintain bleaching power, according to Japanese research.

If I'm out running and hit a red light, should I stop or jog on the spot?

JAMEER, HARTFORD, CT

Neither. If you stand there, you risk cooling down, and if you jog in place, you just look silly, says Rachel Cosgrove, C.S.C.S., co-owner of Results Fitness in Santa Clarita, California. "A smarter strategy is to do a dynamic stretch. This keeps your

glutes firing and your ankles and hips mobile, both of which help prevent muscle strains." Cosgrove recommends this stretch: Stand in a staggered stance, left foot forward, hands on your hips. Bend your left knee and push your hips forward to stretch your hip flexors while engaging your glutes, and press your right heel into the ground. Reach up with your right arm and hold for 5 seconds. Then step back with your left foot and switch sides. Keep at it until the light turns green and you're ready to hit the gas again.

TRAVIS RATHBONE (brushes); prop styling: Richie Owings/Halley Resources and Wendy Shelton/Halley Resources