

Flossing:

A new secret to good health?

Flossing helps clean teeth in the areas that brushing alone just cannot reach (between the teeth and under your gum line). Flossing and then brushing helps remove plaque, a sticky substance that accumulates and hardens over time. Left untreated, plaque deposits can eventually lead to gum disease and tooth decay.

Learning the proper way to floss your teeth is important. Your dentist or hygienist will be happy to demonstrate proper flossing techniques. The basic flossing techniques are shown in the photos below.

One type of dental floss does not work for everyone. Consumers can choose between waxed or unwaxed, flavored or unflavored, and regular or tape types. In general, a waxed floss slides between the teeth easier than an unwaxed floss. Flavored floss leaves a fresh taste in the mouth, and is especially nice for those times when brushing or rinsing is not possible. Tape floss is typically thicker than regular floss and is generally favored by people with wide gaps between their teeth.

Some companies are now marketing dental floss made from newer, "space age" materials. These newer materials offer increased smoothness and are also stronger than traditional floss. Ask your dentist which dental floss is right for you.

Some people with limited dexterity or arthritis cannot easily manipulate dental floss. These people may wish to try dental floss holders or intra-dental cleaners. Whatever your needs or preferences are, there is bound to be a product that will help you clean between the teeth and under the gum line. Brush and floss your teeth daily to help ensure the wellness of your teeth.

Basic Flossing Techniques:



Lightly wrap 18 inches of dental floss around your middle fingers.



Firmly grasp the dental floss with your index fingers.



Forming a C-shape, carefully slide floss up and down between the tooth and gum line.



Gently slide the floss in between both sides of your teeth and repeat until finished.



Floss Facts:

- People with periodontal disease are 1.5–2 times as likely to suffer a fatal heart attack and 3 times as likely to suffer a stroke.
- New studies show that diabetic patients with severe periodontitis have difficulty maintaining normal blood sugar levels.
- Infected oral tissues with pneumonia bacteria can be inhaled into the lungs where immune defenses fail to wipe them out.
- Mothers of prematurely born babies were 7 times more likely to have advanced periodontal disease than mothers whose babies were normal weight at birth.
- Individuals with artificial joints and heart valves are at an increased risk of suffering a serious infection when periodontal bacteria enter the bloodstream.

For more information on the link between gum disease and other disease, check out the American Academy of Periodontology web site at www.perio.org.