

PATIENT'S PAGE



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Flossing...the key to keeping your teeth!

Flossing removes bacteria, prevents gum disease and prevents the loss of teeth.

The purpose of flossing is to remove plaque, the colorless film of bacteria that forms on the surface of teeth. The bacteria in plaque produce toxins, and if you don't remove it the toxins will irritate the gums, create a painful inflammation, and eventually cause the loss of bone around the tooth. Flossing once at the end of the day is all it takes—before or after brushing doesn't matter. The primary reason for flossing is plaque removal.

If you're old enough to have teeth, floss them!

The point of flossing is to clean the tight space between teeth that grow closely together. Wherever two teeth are touching, you need to find a way to clean between them. Even baby teeth, though they will eventually fall out, should be flossed since bacteria can grow between closely spaced teeth and make gums tender. Children who do their own flossing may find that a floss holder makes the task easier.

Flossing only helps if you do it right.

While brushing cleans the sticky plaque off most of the tooth, floss reaches where bristles cannot. But the sticky stuff stays if you have poor flossing technique. The biggest mistake people make is that they just floss right down on their gums and back up. You want to wrap the floss around the tooth and then, in a sawing motion, rub the floss up and down the tooth to remove the bacteria.

Good oral health is a component of good overall health.

Gum disease is actually an infection in your mouth. No infection is good for the body, especially in people whose capability to fight infection may be compromised by an illness such as diabetes or an immune disease. Some research has associated chronic gum disease with conditions including stroke, heart disease, and low birth weight in newborns (when the mother had gingivitis).

Any floss is better than no floss.

The best floss is the one you're going to USE and flossing should be as routine as brushing. Find the floss you like, whether it's minty, flat, thick or covered in fluoride. Floss holders and disposable floss sticks have become popular and, many have found, easier to use. As long as you're getting in there and removing that plaque, you can prevent gum disease and preserve your teeth for a lifetime!

Did you know that without flossing, 40% of the surfaces of your teeth are NEVER clean?



Less than 50 years ago, elderly people went to sleep with their teeth in a jar next to the bed. But now your teeth can last a lifetime, provided you use good oral hygiene—which includes a daily regimen of flossing before bedtime.