Patient’s Page

Flossing - Facts, Excuses, and How

How to Floss

• Use about 18 inches of floss wound around one of your middle fingers, with the rest wound around the opposite middle finger.

• Hold the floss tightly between the thumbs and forefingers and gently insert it between the teeth.

• Curve the floss into a “C” shape against the side of the tooth.

• Rub the floss gently up and down, keeping it pressed against the tooth. Don’t jerk or snap the floss.

• Floss all your teeth. Don’t forget to floss behind your back teeth.

Seven Excuses for Not Flossing

1. My hands are too big, or I have no dexterity. Power flossers can solve this problem!

2. Flossing pushes food down into the pocket. Flossing cleans about 30% more of the tooth’s surface.

3. My gums bleed. This is a sign you REALLY need to start flossing because you have an infection in your gums.

4. I get my teeth professionally cleaned twice a year, so I don’t have to floss. Plaque can turn to hard calculus in less than two days. Daily cleaning is needed to keep your teeth clean.

5. It takes too long. Brushing and flossing can take less than 10 minutes.

6. My teeth are too tight for the floss. Try a polymer floss that is ADA-approved or use the flosser.

7. I’m afraid of damaging my gums when I floss. The technique is so important. Remember to slide the floss between the gum and teeth with light pressure.

Flossing Facts:
- A good tip is to establish a regular routine and time for flossing so you don’t forget.
- If you’re only brushing, and not flossing, you’re only cleaning 60 percent of your teeth.
- No time to floss? Floss your upper teeth in the morning, lower teeth in the evening.
- Flossing disturbs bacteria and stops it before it can create plaque and cause gum and bone disease. Floss once a day for a healthier set of teeth and gums.
- Flossing helps to remove plaque from in between your teeth. Brushing only cleans three-fourths of your teeth’s surfaces. That means if you brush and don’t floss it is like not cleaning seven of your teeth!
- Flossing cleans the areas your toothbrush cannot reach - the tooth surfaces between your teeth.