

Get a floss holder. If you lack the hand dexterity to floss, try soft wooden plaque removers, which look similar to toothpicks, or a two-pronged plastic floss holder. Both allow you to clean between teeth with one hand.

It's a simple piece of string, sometimes flavored, often waxed. Wrap 18 inches or so around your finger, and you have a powerful tool that can help prevent cavities and give your overall health a big boost.

Dental floss dislodges food particles trapped between the teeth and under the gums where

toothbrushes can't reach. Left unchecked, bacterial buildup can lead to cavities, bad breath, and gum disease.

If that's not scary enough, "gum disease is an inflammatory disorder that can contribute to major problems throughout the body." Recent studies suggest links between advanced gum disease and diabetes, heart disease, Alzheimer's, and stomach cancer, though more research is needed.

We hope our patients floss once daily." Bedtime, rather than morning, is the better choice for once-a-day flossers.

"Your salivary flow is very low when you're sleeping, so for those 7 or 8 hours you're in bed, you're not washing away the bacteria teeming in your mouth."

Source:

http://cancer.dartmouth.edu/pf/health_encyclopedia/uh1644

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BRUSHING AND FLOSSING YOUR TEETH

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Your teeth can last a lifetime if you practice basic dental care, which involves brushing and flossing regularly, eating a mouth-healthy diet, and visiting your dentist and/or dental hygienist for regular checkups and cleanings. Developing good dental health habits is the best way to prevent tooth decay and gum disease.

“There is no instant gratification with flossing -- that’s the problem,” says Alla Wheeler, RDH, MPA, associate professor of the Dental Hygiene Program at the New York University School of Dentistry. “Patients don’t think it does anything.”

But flossing does about 40% of the work required to remove sticky bacteria, or plaque, from your teeth. Plaque generates acid, which can cause cavities, irritate the gums, and lead to gum disease. “Each tooth has five surfaces. If you don’t floss, you are leaving at least two of the surfaces unclean,” Wheeler explains. “Floss is the only thing that can really get into that space between the teeth and remove bacteria.”

Gum disease can ruin the youthful aesthetics of your smile by eating away at gums and teeth. It also attacks the bones that support your teeth

and the lower third of your face. People who preserve the height of that bone by flossing look better as they age.

Choosing the Right Dental Floss

Most floss is made of either nylon or Teflon, and both are equally effective. People with larger spaces between their teeth or with gum recession (loss of gum tissue, which exposes the roots of the teeth) tend to get better results with a flat, wide dental tape. If your teeth are close together, try thin floss (sometimes made of Gore-Tex) that bills itself as shred resistant.

Bridges and braces call for a defter touch to get underneath the restorations or wires and between the teeth. Use a floss threader, which looks like a plastic sewing needle. Or look for a product called Super Floss that has one stiff end to fish the floss through the teeth followed by a spongy segment and regular floss for cleaning.

The most important thing, though, is to choose floss you’ll use. “I tell my patients, ‘I don’t care if you use shoe laces as long as you floss,’” Wheeler says. (Just kidding, of course.

Flossing Tips

Perfect your flossing technique. Use a piece of floss 15 to 18 inches long, slide it between the teeth, wrap it around each tooth in the shape of a “C,” and polish with an up and down motion.

Don’t worry about a little blood. “Bleeding means the gums are inflamed because plaque has built up and needs to be cleaned away. Don’t let that deter you,”. Bleeding after a few days, however, could be a sign of periodontal disease. Talk to your dentist.

