



hygiene

With all the wonders of modern science and technology available to you today there is no better way to clean in between your teeth than Dental Floss. Inexpensive, readily available and easy to use. It is an excellent tool in the fight against dental decay and periodontal (gum) disease. There are many types of dental floss available in your local pharmacy, supermarket or in our office. Please speak with us regarding the best floss for your particular dental needs.

Here's how to floss

You should floss under both sides of each flap of gum tissue between your teeth. The following technique has proven to be very effective:

- Break off about 50cms of floss and wind a good bit of it around one of your middle fingers. Wind the rest around the middle finger of the other hand. Grasp the floss with the thumb and fore finger of each hand, leaving about 2cms of floss between the two hands to work with.
- Pull the floss taut and use a gentle sawing motion to insert it between the two teeth. When the floss reaches the tip of the triangular gum flap, curve the floss into a C shape against one of the teeth. Then slide the floss gently into the space between the tooth and the gum until you feel resistance. Holding the floss tightly wrapped around the tooth, rub the floss back and forth up and down five or six times along the side of the tooth. Without removing the floss, curve it around the adjacent tooth and rub back and forth around that one too. Repeat on the rest of your teeth. Don't forget the far sides of your back teeth. When the floss becomes frayed or soiled, a turn on each middle finger brings out a fresh section of floss. Flossing should be done at least once a day, every day. The best time to floss is of an evening before you brush. This removes the barrier of plaque on the side surfaces of the teeth and allows the fluoride in the toothpaste to topically act on the enamel when you brush, helping your teeth become more resistant to decay.

Flossing Problems

If you don't like manipulating floss, try one of the commercial floss holders. They have limited flexibility, however, and you must use them with care to avoid injuring the gum. You may have trouble working with the floss between certain teeth, or the floss may consistently break or tear in certain areas. Several causes are possible, including calculus build-up, or improperly placed fillings. Please let us know if this problem occurs. Flossing under bridges requires additional instruction and the use of floss threaders or special floss, called "super floss". Please discuss these tools with your dentist or hygienist before using them.



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Brushing

The Brush to use

Hard bristles were once recommended but are now thought to be too abrasive to the teeth and gums. We now suggest a soft, end-rounded, nylon bristle brush. Be sure to discard brushes when the bristles are bent or frayed or approximately every three to four months. Also, a small-headed brush can gain access into all areas of the mouth.

The team at Dental Excellence recommend electric toothbrushes as the high frequency oscillations are more effective at plaque removal than manual brushes. Please talk to our hygienist for the current recommendations of oral health care products.

How to brush

Begin by placing the head of the brush beside your teeth with the bristles angled against the gum line (where the teeth and gums meet) at approximately 45 degrees. Think of the brush as both a toothbrush and a gum brush. With the bristles contacting both the tooth and the gum, move the brush in a gentle circular motion several times across each tooth individually as if the goal is to massage the gum. Don't try to force the bristles under the gum line; that will happen naturally, especially with a brush that has soft, flexible bristles. Brush the outer surface of the upper and lower teeth. It is easier to reach the outer surfaces of the back teeth by keeping your mouth half closed, this relaxes your cheek muscles and allows you room to access the back areas. Then, use the same circular motion to cleanse the inside surfaces, remembering to continuously massage the gums as well as brushing the teeth. Try to concentrate harder on the inside surfaces; studies show they are often neglected. For the upper and lower front teeth, brush the inside surfaces by using the brush vertically and making 20 to 30 small circles behind each tooth and gum individually.

Finish up by lightly brushing the chewing surfaces of the upper and lower teeth several times. You should also brush your tongue for fresher breath.

For specific questions related to your individual needs, talk to our experienced hygiene team.