

# Flossing 101

We all know that brushing your teeth twice a day is a good way to keep your mouth and teeth healthy. Yet, while a toothbrush is effective in cleaning the exposed surfaces of a tooth, the bristles often can't get those "hard-to-reach" areas between the teeth. That's why flossing needs to be part of your daily oral health routine, too. By skipping the floss, you may be missing up to 40% of the surface area of your teeth! Dental floss can work hand-in-hand with your toothbrush to remove more plaque effectively.

Available in a variety of forms—floss can be found unwaxed or waxed, flavored or unflavored, and in regular or wide. For the most part, the type you choose is completely up to you. You might find waxed floss easier to use between tight teeth or restorations while unwaxed floss will spread out its fibers during use for greater tooth contact. You can also find pre-threaded floss, which is floss attached to a toothpick or a handle—which some people find easier to use.



Don't forget that kids also need to floss! As soon as your child has two teeth that touch, flossing should start. The sooner you add flossing to the brushing routine, the easier it will be for kids to continue this healthy oral hygiene habit as they get older.

## Did you know?

Failure to remove plaque from all tooth surfaces is the main cause of tooth decay, gum disease and bad breath.



# Quick bites

## Flossing facts to keep your teeth healthy:

- Dental floss should be used at least once a day for two to three minutes.
- Pick a time of day to floss and stick to it.
- When flossing, be consistent and start in the same place in the mouth and work your way around so you don't miss any spots.
- You'll need about 18 inches of floss to make sure you have enough for your entire mouth.
- If you notice soreness or a bit of blood, don't give up! This will go away with continued flossing, which will be a sign that your gums are getting healthier.
- If you continue to find flossing difficult, ask your dentist about helpful tips or other options.



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