

It's always a smart choice to make flossing part of your oral care routine. It is one of the best ways to take care of your teeth at any age. However, it takes a little practice to floss effectively. Here are some tips to help.



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# Basic Flossing

Preventive

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Brushing your teeth twice a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride is essential, but toothbrush bristles cannot always reach the spaces between teeth. These spaces trap bits of food and plaque, a sticky film of decay-causing bacteria. Dental floss or other interdental cleaners can help keep these tooth surfaces clean and reduce the chance of tooth decay.

Begin by choosing a brand of floss that displays the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance. The Seal is your assurance that the product has met the ADA's criteria for safety and effectiveness. Your dental office may also recommend particular products for your oral health needs.



If you have difficulty handling floss, you may find it helpful to use a floss holder or other interdental cleaners, which include special picks or narrow brushes that reach between teeth. Ask your dentist or dental hygienist to help you develop a comfortable and effective technique. To keep your smile healthy, brush twice a day, floss daily, eat a balanced diet, limit snacks and see your dentist regularly.

## Basic Flossing

*Here are tips for effective flossing. It may feel clumsy at first, but don't give up. It takes a little time to get the hang of it.*



1. Break off about 18 inches of floss and wind most of it around one of your middle fingers. Wind the remaining floss around a finger of the opposite hand. This finger will take up the used floss.



2. Hold the floss tightly between your thumbs and forefingers. Guide the floss between your teeth, using a gentle rubbing motion. To avoid injuring your gums, never snap the floss into gum tissue.



3. When the floss reaches the gum line, curve it into a C shape against one tooth. Gently slide it into the space between the gum and the tooth.



4. Hold the floss tightly against the tooth. Gently rub the side of the tooth, moving the floss away from the gum with up and down motions.



5. Repeat this method on the rest of your teeth. As you move from tooth to tooth, unwind the clean floss with one finger and take up the used floss with the finger on the opposite hand. Do not forget the back side of the last tooth.

*To keep your smile healthy, brush twice a day, floss daily, eat a balanced diet, limit snacks and see your dentist regularly.*