

# QUICK FACTS: FLOSSING



## Why is flossing is so important?

Flossing is just as important as brushing. Brushing cleans about 60% of teeth so it is necessary to floss daily to prevent tooth decay. The plaque that forms between the gum line and teeth can only be removed by flossing. Flossing polishes teeth's surface, but also helps to control bad breath and prevent periodontal disease, which can be linked to major systematic illnesses.

## How often should I floss?

Brush and floss teeth a minimum of twice a day. The best time to brush and floss teeth is after breakfast and before bed. If an excuse for not flossing is that it takes too long, try flossing the top teeth in the morning and the bottom teeth at night. It does not matter if you choose to floss before or after brushing, or the flavor or type of floss. The important thing is that flossing is part of an everyday oral health care routine.

## What is the correct way to floss teeth?

1. Take a piece of floss, about a foot and a half long, and wind most of it around the middle finger on one hand.
2. Then, wind some of the rest of it around the middle finger of the other hand.
3. Hold the floss firmly between the thumbs and index fingers (the finger next to the thumb) and choose two teeth to place the floss between.
4. Curve the floss into a "U" shape and guide the floss between the teeth. Then wrap the floss around the tooth and slide floss up and down against the tooth surface and under the gum line.
5. Repeat this between each tooth. This should take between two and three minutes. Once you have finished, rinse your mouth out with water.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- ♥ In the United States, tooth decay is the second most common disease. This first being the common cold.
- ♥ Sharks have teeth as strong as steel.
- ♥ The largest mammal on earth, the blue whale, can only eat tiny shrimp because it has no teeth.
- ♥ Blue toothbrushes are more popular than red ones.
- ♥ Drinking three or more sugary sodas a day can increase your tooth decay by 62%.
- ♥ Brushing by itself cleans only about 60% of your teeth's surfaces. So, if you are only brushing and not flossing it is almost the same as not cleaning seven of your teeth.