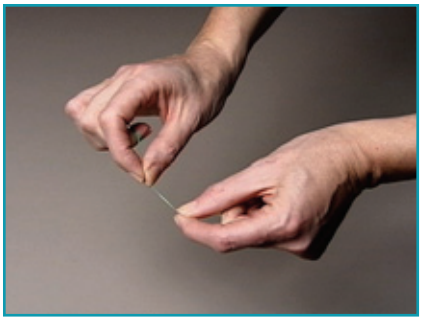
Flossing

Why is flossing important?

Most cavities and periodontal disease begin between the teeth. While brushing is important, the bristles of your toothbrush simply don't remove plaque and bacteria from between the teeth. That's why we recommend that you floss every day.



Leave about one inch



Pull in a "C" shape



A floss fork

How to floss

Don't worry about the type of floss; they all work pretty much the same. Choose the type of floss you like.

Wind 18 inches of floss around the middle fingers of each hand, leaving about five inches between your hands. Pinch the floss between your thumbs and index fingers, and leave about one inch in between to work with.

Gently guide the floss down between the teeth using a side-to-side motion. If your teeth are too tight to floss, or if it catches or tears, let us know about it. These are problems that need to be fixed.

Pull the floss tightly in a C-shape around the side of the tooth and slide it under the gumline. Clean the surface of the tooth by moving the floss up and down several times to remove all the food and bacteria. Then pull the floss around the next tooth and repeat the process. Wind the floss to a fresh section and gradually work your way around your mouth, cleaning both sides of every tooth. If you have problems reaching some areas, you may want to use a floss fork.

If your gums are infected, they'll bleed when you floss. That's to be expected if you are just beginning to floss. After a week or so of regular flossing, the bleeding should go away, and you'll be well on your way to healthier teeth and gums.

Copyright © 2005. Patterson Dental Supply, Inc. All rights reserved. #PD 1001 10/31/04