



11/18/2020

### Flossing Your Teeth

- Dental health begins with good home care of your mouth and teeth. Toothbrushing helps to remove the plaque germs that live on your teeth. Always brush every side of each tooth on the outside, inside, and chewing surfaces. It should take at least two minutes to brush your teeth.
- Flossing will remove plaque germs from **between and under the gumline** of your teeth. These germs are hard to remove with a toothbrush alone. The use of dental floss and toothbrushing together helps to remove germs that cause cavities and gum disease. Gum disease is not healthy and may lead to tooth loss.

#### How to Floss

- Wrap about an arm's length piece of floss around the middle finger of each hand.
- Hold about an inch of the floss tightly between your thumb and forefinger.
- Gently slide the floss between the teeth.
- Press the floss against one side of the tooth in a “C” shape and then the other and move the floss up and down the tooth several times, being sure to reach under the gumline.
- When you move on to the next tooth, be sure to use a clean section of floss.

Your gums may bleed a little the first few days you use dental floss, but our gums will become healthier if you keep flossing. If it is hard for you to use floss, try a floss holder that are available at a drug store or pharmacy.

\*It is recommended that you visit your dentist twice a year to maintain the health of your teeth and gums. You may need to go more often if you are at high risk for dental disease.

#### Resources

NOTE: This fact sheet was derived from one previously published by the Arizona Department of Health Services.

American Dental Association – Mouth Healthy  
<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en>

Healthline  
<https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-floss>