

The Wellness Express™



Jump on the train to good health

Issue 4, October 2012

The Benefits of Flossing

Presented by:

Introduction

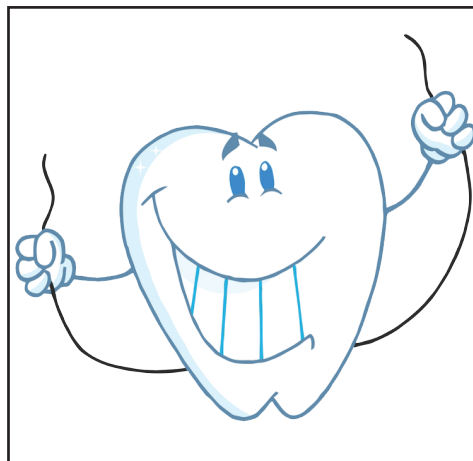
Flossing, like drinking enough water, quitting smoking and getting a sufficient amount of exercise each week, can be a challenging health habit to develop, though it *is* worth your time and effort. The act of flossing may help prevent tooth decay and gum disease and it leaves your teeth feeling clean and healthy. Flossing allows you to reach the areas that a toothbrush alone cannot reach, and it removes bacteria and food particles from between your teeth, which helps prevent the accumulation of tartar - an encrustation on your teeth consisting of hardened dental plaque. Brushing and flossing can eliminate the plaque from which tartar forms, though once tartar forms, it must be removed with special tools during a visit with your dentist. According to the American Dental Association, or ADA, you should floss daily to achieve and maintain good oral hygiene.¹

Oral Health Benefits

Flossing every day is a simple way to improve your oral health. Flossing, especially when performed in combination with tooth brushing, may help prevent gum disease, also known as periodontal disease or gingivitis.

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A 2006 study published in the *Journal of Periodontology* showed that twins who flossed twice a day along with brushing over a period of 2 weeks reduced gum bleeding - key evidence of gum disease - by approximately 40% more than brushing alone.



Flossing may also help prevent dental caries (cavities) and halitosis (bad breath). A systematic review published in 2006 in the *Journal of Dental Research* states that regular flossing of children's teeth by a trained adult can significantly decrease interproximal cavities between the teeth in children at high risk of cavities.³ However, the authors of this study note that their findings may not necessarily apply to more typical floss-users (i.e., self-flossers).

Exercise of the Week

Lateral Glide in a Reverse Bridge Position

Start: Lie on your back on the ball in the Reverse Bridge position as shown. Arms are straight out to the side, palms up

Exercise: Keeping your body as still as possible, shuffle your feet over to one side, until one shoulder comes off the ball. Stabilize in this position for 1-2 counts, then shuffle back to the starting position. Pause, then shuffle your feet over to the other side & hold. Repeat 6-12 times per side, alternating with each repetition.



Halitosis, or oral malodor, is a complex problem that may be caused by numerous contributing factors, including overgrowth of microorganisms in your oral cavity. A thorough medical and dental history is necessary to assess the true, underlying cause of this health problem. According to a 2006 review article published in the *Journal of Dental Hygiene*, flossing, along with proper tooth brushing, tongue cleaning and use of interdental aids, is an effective mechanical method that can help reduce microorganism overgrowth in your oral cavity.⁴

Flossing Technique

Here are a few general flossing technique tips to help you get the most out of this important health practice:

- Break off an 18-20-inch strand of floss and wrap it around your middle fingers, leaving an inch or two of open floss. Gently tug on your floss strand with both fingers to ensure that it will not slip during flossing.
- Use a gentle rubbing motion to maneuver the floss into the space between your teeth, being careful to not “snap” the floss into your gums, which could cause gum irritation or bleeding.
- Once the floss contacts your gum line, gently rub the sides of each tooth with an up and down motion as you move away from your gum line.
- Repeat this process on your other teeth, remembering to floss the back side of your last tooth.

If you have difficulty using or handling dental floss, consider using other tooth-cleaning aids, such as picks, sticks or special brushes.

Waxed options exist for individuals who find conventional un-waxed floss difficult to use due to a lack of space between the teeth. The ADA states that you can floss before or after brushing with the same results, as long as you do a thorough job.



A Healthy Oral Hygiene Program

A healthy and comprehensive oral hygiene program includes consuming a balanced diet low in processed and sugary foods, minimizing between-meal snacking, brushing your teeth (and tongue!) twice a day, cleaning between your teeth using dental floss or other aids once per day and visiting your oral health care professional for routine cleanings and examinations. Consider replacing your toothbrush every few months or when your brush's bristles begin to fray.

Your chiropractor understands the importance of flossing and other oral health practices in improving your quality of life and he or she will counsel you further on why and how to pursue healthy oral habits for long-term tooth and gum health.

Quote to Inspire

“A man begins cutting his wisdom teeth the first time he bites off more than he can chew”

Herb Caen

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