



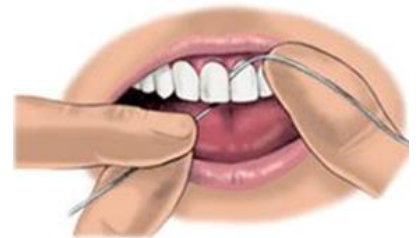
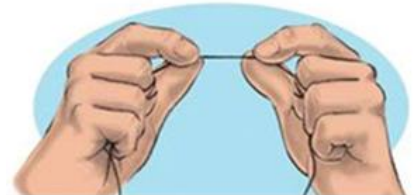
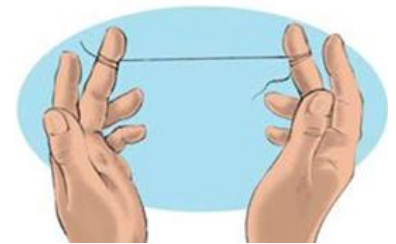
## FLOSSING YOUR TEETH

Dental health begins with good oral hygiene. Proper toothbrushing helps to remove the germs that live on your teeth, called plaque, from the cheek side, tongue side, and chewing surfaces of your teeth. However, plaque will still remain between your teeth and below your gumline unless you use dental floss.<sup>1</sup>

Flossing will remove the plaque from the hard-to-reach areas that your toothbrush cannot reach. Combining the use of dental floss with toothbrushing each day is the most effective way to remove all the plaque on your teeth. Flossing will help to prevent cavities and a gum infection called periodontal disease.<sup>1</sup>

### How to Floss:

1. Cut off a section of floss about 16-18 inches long. Wrap it around the middle fingers of each hand.
2. Pinch the floss with your thumb and forefinger of each hand so that the floss between your hands is about 1-2 inches long. Pull it tight so you can insert the floss in a space between two teeth.
3. Curve the floss around each tooth in a “C” shape to gently guide it up and down against the sides of the teeth and slightly under the gumline until you feel resistance.
4. Floss each tooth thoroughly with a new section of floss.
5. Remember to floss behind your back teeth.
6. Floss picks are an alternative to regular floss for patients who have a hard time maneuvering the string between their fingers. By holding the floss for you and having an easy-to-use handle, floss picks can be a less complicated option for some. Although traditional flossing is still recognized as the most effective way to remove plaque from in between the teeth and below the gums, use of floss picks for patients with dexterity issues is still a very effective way of exercising good oral hygiene.





For more helpful flossing instructions, visit the American Dental Hygienists' Association's website: [http://www.adha.org/resources-docs/7222\\_Proper\\_Flossing.pdf](http://www.adha.org/resources-docs/7222_Proper_Flossing.pdf)

To receive oral health information and tips to your mobile phone or device, register at <https://www.text2floss.com/>. Registration is easy and can be done online or from your phone. Use your cell phone to text the word "Floss" to the number 878787.

For more information, contact the Division of Public Health, Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services, at 302-744-4554 and [www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsm/ohphome.html](http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsm/ohphome.html).

## Resources

1. American Dental Association, 2014, *Flossing*, In Mouth Healthy, <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/f/flossing>.
2. What is Flossing? [Illustrations], <http://www.intelligentdental.com/2011/11/16/what-is-flossing/>