



# FLOSS YOUR WAY TO A HEALTHIER MOUTH.

## Better dental health

Everyone knows it's important to brush twice a day for good oral health. But while brushing removes plaque from your teeth, it's not enough. For a truly healthy mouth you need to floss, too. Why? Because it removes plaque from between teeth and below the gum line where periodontal (gum) disease often begins.<sup>1</sup> Talk with your dentist about how to floss properly to avoid injuring your gums. In the meantime, here are some helpful tips to get you started.

### How to floss<sup>1</sup>

- › Don't avoid cleaning between your teeth, even when it's awkward or uncomfortable.
- › Break off about 18 inches of floss and wind most of it around one of your middle fingers. Wind the remaining floss around the same finger of the opposite hand. This finger will take up the floss as you go.
- › Hold the floss tightly between your thumbs and forefingers, leaving a 1 to 2 inch length in-between. To floss your upper teeth, use your thumbs to guide the floss between the edges of your teeth. To floss your lower teeth, use your index fingers.
- › When the floss reaches the beginning of the gum line, curve it into a C-shape against one tooth. Gently slide it into the space between the gum and the tooth.
- › Always use a gentle rubbing motion, rather than snapping the floss into the gums.
- › Hold the floss firmly against your teeth. Gently rub the side of the tooth, moving the floss away from the gum with up and down motions.
- › Repeat on all of your teeth.



### Teach your kids how to floss as early as age two<sup>1</sup>

- › In addition to helping young kids floss, it's important to brush their teeth twice a day with a child size toothbrush and a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. By age six or seven, they usually have the dexterity to do it on their own.
- › If your kids have spaces between their teeth, you don't need to begin flossing until the teeth touch.
- › If your child has braces, look for special orthodontic toothbrushes and floss threaders.
- › If you or someone in your family finds flossing awkward or difficult, ask your dental hygienist about special brushes, picks or sticks that can make flossing easier.

1. Mouth Healthy. American Dental Association. "5 Steps to a Flawless Floss". Accessed March 2017. <<http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/f/Flossing%20Steps>>

**Together, all the way.<sup>®</sup>**



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