



TARGETING HEALTHY SMILES

how to floss



You can help keep
your mouth healthy and
your smile bright by
taking time each day
to care for your
teeth and gums,
eating a balanced diet
and visiting
your dentist regularly.

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flossing basics

The best way to remove decay-causing plaque — the sticky film of bacteria that coats your teeth — is by cleaning your teeth thoroughly



every day. While toothbrushing removes plaque from the tooth

surfaces, it can't do the entire job of removing plaque. Cleaning between the teeth with floss or interdental cleaners removes debris from between the teeth and under the gumline — areas where your toothbrush can't reach. Tooth decay and gum disease often begin in these areas, so it's important to clean them thoroughly.

People who have difficulty handling dental floss may prefer to use other kinds of interdental cleaners. These aids include special brushes, picks or sticks. If you use interdental cleaners, ask your dentist about how to use them properly, to avoid injuring your gums.

Brush twice a day, using a toothpaste that contains fluoride, which helps protect your teeth from decay. When choosing toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss or other dental products, look for the American



Dental Association Seal of Acceptance, an important symbol of a dental product's safety and effectiveness.



If you haven't been in the habit of flossing, it may feel a bit clumsy at first. Here are some helpful tips...



one: 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 it becomes dirty.



two: Hold the floss tightly between your thumbs and forefingers. Guide the floss between your teeth using a gentle rubbing motion. To avoid injuring your gums, never snap the floss into the gums.



three: When the floss reaches the gumline, curve it into a C shape against one tooth. Gently slide it into the space between the gum and the tooth.



four: Hold the floss tightly against the tooth. Gently rub the side of the tooth, moving the floss away from the gum with up and down motions.



five: Repeat this method on the rest of your teeth. Don't forget the back side of your last tooth.