

Choosing the Right Floss

Flossing is Just as Important as Brushing

According to most experts, there's a very simple formula for keeping teeth healthy year-round: brush two times a day for two minutes, floss once a day, and visit your dentist at least twice a year. It's not a very long list of instructions, but a comprehensive study done by the CDC in 2016 found that around only 30% of the population were taking their dentists' instructions to heart when it comes to flossing, as most people believe that brushing their teeth is enough to remove tooth-damaging plaque and food particles from between their teeth. However, as any dentist will confirm, not flossing can lead to gum disease, which in turn can lead to tooth decay or loss, and has even been linked to heart disease in recent studies.

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Just like toothbrushes, there are multiple types of floss to be found on store shelves, and finding the right kind can be overwhelming at first. The most common flosses are:

- Unwaxed/waxed floss
- Flavored/unflavored floss
- Dental Tape
- Flossing picks

In recent years, electric flossers have also been added to the list of flossing products as well. So how do you choose? The amount of space between your teeth and the level of comfort you experience when attempting to get the floss between them is the best measure, which means that a bit of trial and error may be required at first. However, dentists have a few suggestions to help your search for the best floss for you. If your teeth are very tight, going with a waxed floss, either flavored or unflavored as you prefer, is a good place to start. If you have wider gaps in your teeth, dental tape will clean the spaces between your teeth best. Meanwhile, if wrapping the traditional dental tape around your fingers is too uncomfortable, difficult, or you're having trouble reaching all of the spaces between your teeth when you use the traditional wrapped floss, the floss picks or an electric flosser is the best choice for you.

What Your Dentist Wants You to Know

If you don't know if you have large gaps between your teeth that you need dental tape, or if it's a tight enough fit that you need wax covered floss, some experimentation will be necessary. This process may be frustrating for you as you try to develop a habit of flossing while also switching products, but what you need to remember is that you are flossing, and that is a good thing. You are doing something essential for your health, and it's not a bad thing if you have to change the way you're doing it from time to time, or experiment with the most comfortable way for you to do it as long as you are accomplishing the flossing part of the equation that is necessary for your overall oral health. So don't be so hard on yourself if you don't get the correct product on your first try, and please don't give up; you're doing yourself a huge favor by continuing to look for the right one. If you have any questions about what types of floss you should try first, or if you need to schedule an appointment, please contact Dr. Bruce Silva's office. His staff and are always happy to assist with any and all of your oral health questions and needs.

Sources

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