

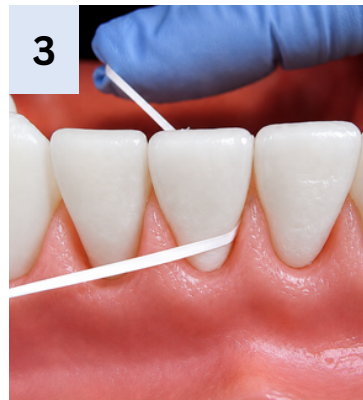
Flossing

Flossing removes plaque (a sticky film) from between the teeth, where a toothbrush cannot reach. Removing this plaque helps prevent dental (tooth) decay and gum disease.

How to Floss Well:

1. Take a long piece of floss (about 16 inches or 40 cm). Wrap it around the middle fingers of each hand. Leave enough floss between your hands to use comfortably (about 5 inches or 12 cm).
2. Pinch the floss between your thumb and index (pointer) fingers. You should have about an inch between your hands to work with.
3. Slide the floss between the teeth. Wrap it in a “C” shape around the tooth, and slide the floss under the gums. Move it up and down along the side of each tooth.
4. Pull the floss out from between the teeth. Then, use a clean part of the floss and move to the next tooth.

Your gums may bleed at first. This is normal. It should stop after a few weeks of brushing and flossing every day.



Tips:

- If the spaces between the teeth are wide, use a fine knitting yarn instead of floss.
- If teeth are fused together (e.g., with a bridge), use a floss threader.
- When flossing someone else, stand or sit where you can clearly see inside their mouth. Make sure your back, neck, and joints feel comfortable.



See the [Interdental Aids](#) information sheet for more details.

