

Follow the floss to a healthier smile

Nobody wants to lose a tooth, but gum disease — which causes tooth loss — can sneak up on you. To get rid of the bacteria that causes gum disease you have to get rid of all the plaque. Flossing at least once a day helps clean plaque from hard-to-reach places between teeth and under the gum line — lowering your risk of cavities and helping to prevent gum disease.

It's easy to smile when you feel good. LifeSmile® is a wellness program that's part of your Delta Dental benefits provided by your employer. It's easier to maintain good oral health habits when you have some support. LifeSmile® has the answers to your dental questions and can help keep you smiling for a lifetime.

Foolproof flossing in six quick steps:

1. Pull about 18 inches of floss and wrap most of it around the index or middle finger of each hand so you have only a few inches between your hands.
2. Hold the floss between your thumbs and fingers and saw between each set of teeth until the floss gently pops between the teeth.
3. Pull the floss tight against the side of one tooth so it forms a "C" shape and slide it up and down.
4. Gently get down below the gum between each tooth and gum line.
5. Repeat for each pair of teeth.
6. Remember to floss the backside of the back tooth in each corner of your mouth.

Dental floss: Which is right for you?

- There are two basic types of floss: nylon multistrand (traditional floss) and monofilament made from a single strand of a synthetic plastic (may be less likely to shred but is usually more expensive).
- Floss comes in different thicknesses and flavors and the traditional may be waxed or unwaxed.
- Each type works well so try different brands and types and see what works best for you.
- Which type is better for your oral health? It's a matter of personal preference. The best one is the one you will use correctly every day.
- Just remember: While water picks, mouthwash or dental sticks can help remove debris, they are no substitute for brushing and flossing.
- Daily flossing and brushing are the best way to effectively care for your teeth and gums between visits to the dentist.

“I was already brushing every day, it didn't take much to add flossing to my routine.”

- Michael, Firefighter

LifeSmile® can help you prevent disease and keep you on the path toward a healthier, happier life. For more tips, tools and resources to help you improve and maintain your oral wellness and overall health throughout the year, make sure to bookmark oralhealth.deltadental.com.

