



Flossing 101



TRUE OR FALSE?

“If I brush my teeth twice a day, then I don’t really need to floss.”

F **alse** Flossing gets between teeth and below the gum line to remove bacteria and food particles. Toothbrushes do not reach in between teeth.



DID YOU KNOW?

43%
of Sailors

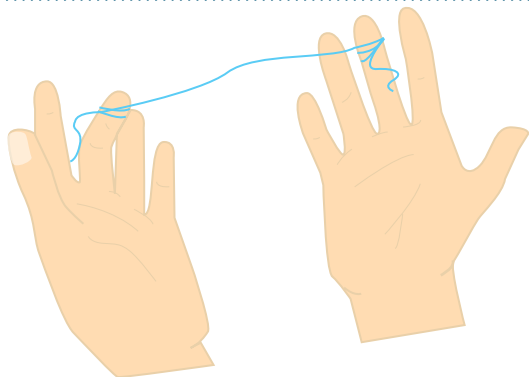


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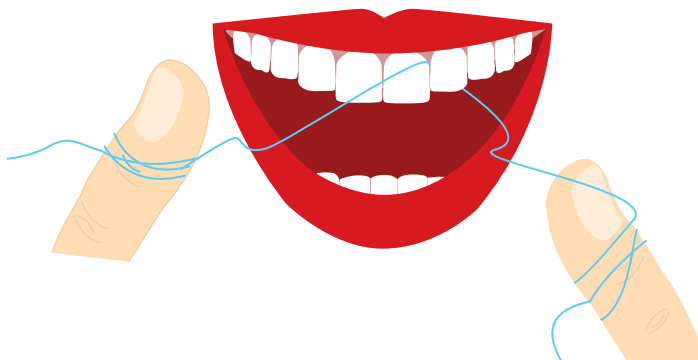
54%
of Marines



DO NOT
floss regularly.¹



Pull several inches of floss out of the container, break it off, and wrap most of it around your pointer and middle finger of one hand with several inches to work with in between hands. The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends approximately 18 inches. Hold the floss taut.³



Slowly guide the floss upward between your teeth, gliding back and forth between teeth. Do not quickly slide the floss straight into your gum area or it may cause bleeding. Gently guide it back down and move on to the next tooth until all surfaces in between teeth are clean. Make sure the very back of the last tooth is cleaned as well.³



You will be glad you flossed today! AND Your teeth and gums thank you for it!

RED FLAGS OF FLOSSING⁴

For a reminder to floss:
Post this in your bathroom or set an alarm on your phone to remind you to floss each day.



Pain when flossing.



Bleeding when flossing.



Visible inflammation of the gum tissue.

FACTS ON FLOSSING^{2,4}



Flossing helps prevent cavities by removing plaque and food particles.



Flossing helps prevent gingivitis. Gingivitis is characterized by red, bleeding, and inflamed gums.



If plaque is not removed from between the teeth, it can eventually harden; this can result in tartar, which leads to gingivitis, the mildest form of gum disease.



Brushing alone will not clean all tooth surfaces. Cleaning the sides of teeth that butt up against each other and below the gum line requires flossing.



**NAVY AND MARINE CORPS
PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER**
PREVENTION AND PROTECTION START HERE

1. Fleet and Marine Corps Health Risk Assessment 2015. Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center EpiData Center Department. <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-programs/2015-HRA-Report-TR-214-2016.pdf>. Prepared May 2016. Accessed June 2016.
2. Flossing. American Dental Association. <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/f/flossing>. Accessed June 2016.
3. 5 Steps to a Flawless Floss. American Dental Association. <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/f/flossing%20Steps>. Accessed June 2016.
4. Gum Disease. American Dental Association. <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/g/gum-disease>. Accessed June 2016.

For more information visit the NMCPHC HPW Preventive Health Toolbox:
www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/Pages/hp-toolbox-august.aspx