

# Start the year with better flossing habits

## Dental floss: What you should know



Start the new year strong with better dental flossing habits. It's one step in your oral hygiene routine with a big impact on your oral health.

### Why is flossing important?

Flossing is one of the most critical parts of a good dental hygiene routine that cleans in between our teeth. From helping prevent tooth decay, gingivitis (which can progress to gum disease), and bad breath; removing plaque your toothbrush can't reach; and improving appearance of teeth and gums, flossing is a "must-do."

### When is the best time of day to floss?

At a minimum, floss your teeth once a day (before brushing your teeth), but nighttime flossing will remove food particles and plaque (a.k.a. sticky bacteria) from between your teeth before you go to sleep at night.

### What are the different flossing tools?

While dental floss is a flexible, long strand, other tools include dental picks, interdental brushes, and water flossers to clean in between our teeth. For those with braces, water flossers and floss with threaders might be most efficient. Check with your dentist about which type of floss might be best for you.

### What does it mean to "hug" your teeth when flossing?<sup>1</sup>

Because a key purpose of flossing is to remove plaque from teeth surfaces, you want to wrap the floss around each tooth in a "C" shape and move the floss side-to-side and up and down. Think of this as the floss 'hugging' your tooth!

### What if my gums bleed while flossing?<sup>2</sup>

If you don't floss regularly or properly, you might notice bleeding during flossing, because bacteria, tartar, or plaque build-up can cause irritation or inflammation. Be sure to speak to your doctor and/or dentist, as bleeding gums can be an early sign of gum disease, vitamin deficiencies, or certain medical conditions.



Start off the year right by scheduling a check-up today

Find nearby in-network dentists, quality ratings and more at [myCigna.com](https://myCigna.com) or on the [myCigna® App](#).

1. Insider. "Most people don't know how to floss correctly - here's how dentists say to do it." <https://www.insider.com/guides/health/dental/how-to-floss>. Medically reviewed. April 30, 2021.  
2. Cleveland Clinic. "Why Your Gums Bleed When Flossing." <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/is-it-bad-if-my-gums-bleed-when-i-floss/>. March 30, 2022.



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