

PREVENTION TECHNIQUES

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

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Your smile is one of the first things that other people notice about you.

The Student Emergency Dental Service would like to offer the following suggestions on preventing future oral health problems:

- Brush at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste and floss daily (see instructions below)
- Avoid soft drinks (soda is very acidic and loaded with sugar)
- Avoid sticky sugary foods and if chewing gum go with sugarless or those with xylitol
- Visit your dentist for regular checkups and cleanings

BASIC FLOSSING

Flossing removes plaque and debris from between the teeth especially near the gum line. It's important that you floss to clean these areas thoroughly because tooth decay and gum disease often start in these areas where your tooth brush can't reach.

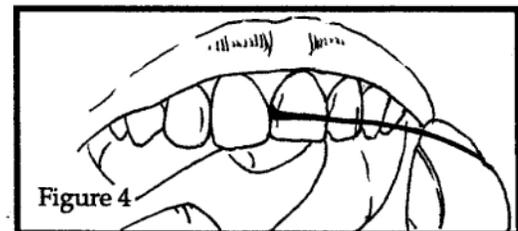
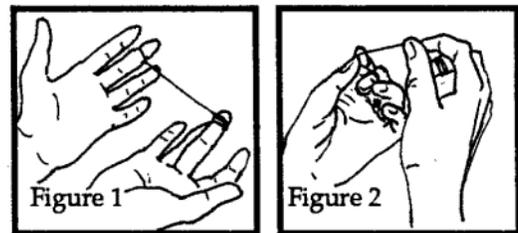
Flossing is a skill that can be developed with a little practice. Don't be discouraged with first flossing attempt ; after a while flossing will take only a few minutes of your time.

1. Break off about 18 inches of floss and wind most of it around one of your middle fingers.
2. Wind the rest around the same finger of the opposite hand. This finger can "take up" the floss as it becomes soiled (Figure 1).
3. Use your thumb and fore fingers with an inch of floss between them to guide the floss between your teeth (Figure 2).
4. Holding the floss tightly (there should be no slack), use a gentle sawing motion to insert the floss between your teeth. Never "snap" the floss into your gums! when the floss reaches the gum line, curve it into C-shape against one tooth and gently slide it into the space between the gum and the tooth until you feel resistance (Figure 3).

5. While holding the floss tightly against the tooth, move the floss away from the gum by scraping the side of the tooth.

6. Without removing the floss, curve it around the other tooth and scrape it too (Figure 4).

7. Scrape floss down on upper teeth and up on bottom teeth. Repeat this method on the rest of your teeth (Figure 5).



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BASIC BRUSHING

Toothbrushing removes the plaque and food particles from your outer, inner, and biting surfaces of your teeth. A brush with soft, end rounded polished bristles is recommended as it is less likely to injure gum tissues.

Brushing your tongue will help freshen your breath.

1. Place the head of your toothbrush beside your teeth, with the bristles angled against the gum line at a 45 degrees angle (Figure 6).
2. Move the brush in a small, circular motion, one tooth at a time, using a gentle “scrubbing motion”.
3. Brush the outer surfaces of each tooth, upper and lower, keeping the bristles angled against the gumline.
4. Use the same method on all of the inside surfaces of your teeth, upper and lower, still using the small circular motion.
5. Scrub the chewing surfaces of all teeth, upper and lower. Don't press hard, let the bristles get into the grooves of your teeth.
6. For the front teeth, brush the inside surfaces of the upper and lower jaws by tilting the brush vertically and making several gentle circular motions with the “toe” (the front part) of the brush over the teeth and gums tissue (Figure 7).

