



Main Messaging

- To maintain good oral health, the American Dental Association (ADA) continues to recommend cleaning between your teeth once a day with an interdental cleaner along with brushing twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, eating a balanced diet and visiting your ADA dentist regularly.
- Interdental cleaners, such as floss, clean between your teeth where brushing alone can't reach. Plaque that is not removed by brushing and flossing can eventually harden into calculus or tartar.
- Whether you use floss or another interdental cleaner is a personal preference, but it's very important to understand the proper technique for each tool so that it is effective. Talk to your dentist about how to use an interdental cleaner to ensure efficacy.

Supporting Points

- More than 500 bacterial species can be found in plaque; some are good and some are bad for your mouth. Together with food debris, water and other components, the plaque buildup around the teeth and on the gum line will contribute to dental disease in teeth and gums.
- Cleaning between teeth is proven to help remove the amount of debris that can lead to cavities or gum disease.
 - The CDC estimates nearly half of all adults (47%) age 30 and older **have some form** of periodontal, or [gum disease](#). By age 65 and older, approximately 70% of adults **have** periodontal disease.
- Keep in mind that flossing should not be painful. If you floss too hard, you could damage the tissue between your teeth. If you're too gentle, you might not be getting the food out. Some discomfort when you first start flossing is normal, but if pain persists longer than a week or two, talk to your dentist.
- There are several options for cleaning between teeth. You might choose to use dental floss or another product specifically made for this purpose like a dental pick, pre-threaded flosser, tiny brushes that reach between the teeth, water flosser or wooden plaque remover.