



FLOSS & FLOSS AIDS

I N F O R M A T I O N

Flossing is important because it cleans plaque and food debris from between the teeth where tooth brushing cannot reach. Removing plaque from between the teeth will help prevent dental cavities and gingivitis.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE FLOSSING:

When flossing a resident's teeth, remember to position yourself so that your back, neck and joints are comfortable and you have a clear view of the mouth.



- 1)** Take about 18 inches of floss and wind it around the middle fingers of each hand with about 5 inches between your 2 hands.
- 2)** Pinch your thumb and index fingers together on the floss and leave about an inch between your two hands.
- 3)** Glide the floss between the resident's teeth. Hold the floss snug to the tooth and make a C shape around the tooth. Slide the floss under the gums. Use an up & down motion along the side of each tooth.
- 4)** Pull the floss out from between the teeth. With a clean section of floss, then move to the next tooth.



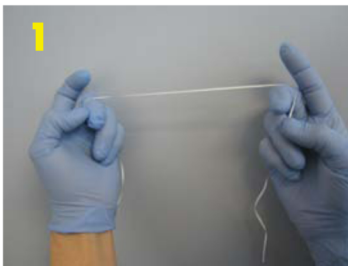
POINTS TO CONSIDER:

If the spaces between the teeth are wide, something as simple as a fine knitting yarn can be used for flossing

Waxed floss, slides easily between teeth and does not shred like other floss

For residents with limited motor skills, floss can be tied in a knot to make a circle and looped around the resident's fingers.

Flossing technique will improve with practice!



Whenever possible, residents should be encouraged to floss their own teeth. If limitations prevent a resident's teeth from being flossed the traditional way, there are a number of floss aids available commercially.

DID YOU KNOW?



Gums may bleed with flossing at first but with regular flossing and brushing this should stop within a few weeks.

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OTHER FLOSS AIDS

FLOSS HANDLES

A handle may allow some residents who could not normally floss on their own to floss more easily. Handles also prevent care providers from having to place their fingers in between the resident's teeth when flossing.

Floss handles come in different shapes and sizes. They can be used with residents that have limited dexterity and can be used with only one hand. There are a variety of floss handles on the market today.

All floss handles have some type of handle with the floss attached. There are some where only the floss is removed and discarded after use. With these models, the handle should be rinsed thoroughly after use.

Disposable floss handles are also available. These should be discarded once the floss becomes broken or frayed.

Proper technique for using a floss handle involves:

1 placing the floss in between two teeth on the biting surface and gently pushing the floss into the space between the teeth.

2 once inserted, pull the floss towards the side of one tooth and rub up and down to remove any debris on the surface of that tooth.

3 push the floss toward the opposite tooth and use the same technique to clean all surfaces between the two teeth.

4 move to the next tooth and repeat for all surfaces.



RE-USABLE FLOSS HANDLE DISPOSABLE FLOSS HANDLE

INTERDENTAL BRUSHES have large handles and small cylindrical brush heads that fit between the teeth. Some models have permanent handles with replacement brushes. These should be maintained the same as a regular toothbrush. Some interdental brushes are completely disposable. Interdental brushes can be dipped in mouth rinse or have toothpaste added to help clean between the teeth.



RE-USABLE
INTERDENTAL BRUSH



DISPOSABLE
INTERDENTAL BRUSH

DENTAL TOOTHPICKS are usually made of wood such as birch, which helps reduce splintering. The shape is designed to allow them to fit into the spaces between teeth. Toothpicks are sometimes called interdental cleaners, dental wood sticks, Stimudents, Dental pics, Soft pics or Go betweens.



DENTAL
TOOTHPICK



INTERDENTAL TIPS are usually made of rubber or plastic and are attached to the end of a toothbrush handle. A rubber tip is usually preferred because it fits between the teeth more easily and is gentler on the gums than the plastic tips. Proper use of an interdental tip involves tracing the tip along the gumline and in between the teeth. Be sure to rinse off the tip after use.