

Mississauga Dental Specialists

Braces Invisalign Teeth Gums & Implants

CALL: 905-275-1022

How to Brush & Floss Properly

Brushing and flossing are of paramount importance to oral hygiene. Though bi-annual professional dental cleanings remove plaque, tartar, and debris, excellent homecare methods are equally valuable. Proper brushing and flossing can enhance the health of the mouth, make the smile sparkle, and prevent serious diseases.

Reasons why proper brushing and flossing are essential:

Prevention of tooth decay – Tooth decay is one of the leading causes of tooth loss, and its treatment often requires complex dental procedures. Tooth decay occurs when the acids found in plaque erode the natural enamel found on the teeth. This phenomenon can easily be prevented by using proper home hygiene methods.

Prevention of periodontal disease – Periodontal disease is a serious, progressive condition which can cause tooth loss, gum recession, and jawbone recession. Periodontal disease is caused by the toxins found in plaque and can lead to serious health problems in other parts of the body. Removing plaque and calculus (tartar) from the surface of the tooth using a toothbrush and from the interdental areas using dental floss, is an excellent way to stave off periodontal problems.

Prevention of halitosis – Bad breath or halitosis is usually caused by old food particles on or between the teeth. These food particles can be removed with regular brushing and flossing, leaving the mouth healthier, and breath smelling fresher.

Prevention of staining – Staining, or yellowing, of teeth can be caused by a wide variety of factors such as smoking, coffee, and tea. The more regularly these staining agents are removed from the teeth using brushing and flossing techniques, the less likely it is that the stains will become permanent.

The Proper Way to Brush

The teeth should be brushed at least twice a day, ideally in the morning and before bed. The perfect toothbrush is small in size with soft, rounded-end bristles, and is no more than three months old. The head of the brush needs to be small enough to access all areas of the mouth, and the bristles should be

soft enough so as not to cause undue damage to the gum tissue. The American Dental Association (ADA) has given electric toothbrushes their seal of approval, stating that those with rotating or oscillating heads are more effective than other toothbrushes.

Here is a basic guide to proper brushing:

1. Place the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle where the gums and teeth meet.
2. Use small circular motions to gently brush the gum line and teeth.
3. Do not scrub or apply too much pressure to the teeth, as this can damage the gums and tooth enamel.
4. Brush every surface of every tooth, cheek-side, tongue-side, and chewing surfaces. Place special emphasis on the surfaces of the back teeth.
5. Use back and forth strokes to brush the chewing surfaces.
6. Brush the tongue to remove fungi, food, and debris.

The Proper Way to Floss

Flossing is a great way to remove plaque from the interdental regions (between the teeth). Flossing is an especially important tool for preventing periodontal disease and limiting the depth of the gum pockets. The interdental regions are difficult to reach with a toothbrush and should be cleansed with dental floss on a daily basis. The flavor and type of floss are unimportant; choose floss that will be easy and pleasant to use.

Here is a basic guide to proper flossing:

1. Cut a piece of floss to around 18 inches long.
2. Wrap one end of the floss around the middle finger of the left hand and the other end around the middle finger of the right hand until the hands are 2-3 inches apart.
3. Work the floss gently between the teeth toward the gum line.
4. Curve the floss in a U-shape around each individual tooth and carefully slide it beneath the gum line.
5. Carefully move the floss up and down several times to remove interdental plaque and debris.
6. Do not pop the floss in and out between the teeth as this will inflame and cut the gums.

If you have any questions about the correct way to brush or floss, please contact our office.