

Magnuson Dental Design

Flossing

Flossing cleans the ~25% of the tooth that the toothbrush cannot reach. The idea of flossing is to remove bacterial biofilms off the sides of the teeth, not just the food chunk wedged between the teeth.

Find a floss type that you like. Waxed, unwaxed, ribbon or tape style; if you like it, you will be more willing to use it. Remove approximately a 16" piece. Wrap it around both middle fingers. This allows the index finger (pointer) and thumb free to manipulate the floss. Place the floss on the tip of the pointers to get to the back teeth. The pointer fingers can also be held straight while the rest of the fingers are curled up. This way all 10 fingers are not placed in the mouth, only the 2 pointers. Sea-saw the floss to get between the teeth, then wrap the floss around the sides (like the letter C). Slide the floss down under the gum line until you feel it "touch bottom". This is where gingivitis and periodontal disease bacteria live. Move in an up and down scraping motion against the side of the tooth several times. Next, move the floss up and over the tip of the gum and slide down the tooth that the previous tooth touches. Remember there are 2 sides to floss within 1 space.

Be systematic taking one tooth at a time. Start with the upper right and work your way to the upper left and then move to the lower.