

# Protecting Your Teeth: Proper brushing and flossing techniques



Learning proper brushing and flossing techniques are an essential part of maintaining good oral health and preventing gum disease. Daily brushing helps remove decay-causing plaque from tooth surfaces and flossing cleans areas between the teeth where the toothbrush can't reach.

## Brushing Technique

- Place a soft bristle brush at a 45-degree angle to the tooth and use a gentle massaging action in small circular strokes.
- Brush the outer and inner surfaces of the tooth, including close to the gumline.
- Use the front tip or “toe” of the brush for the inner front tooth surfaces.
- Apply light pressure as you brush. Teeth are covered by a hard layer of enamel that can be worn down by too-vigorous scrubbing.

## Flossing Technique

- Use about 18 inches of floss, winding most of it around your middle finger and the rest around the middle finger of your other hand. This finger takes up the used floss.

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- Gently guide about an inch of floss, using your thumbs and forefingers, between your teeth.
- Hold floss tightly against the tooth and use a gentle up and down rubbing motion to clean between teeth. Gums can be bruised if floss is “snapped” into place.
- At the gumline, curve floss into a C-shape against sides of both teeth and move it up and down.
- Repeat for all teeth and the back of the last teeth.

