

Even more reasons to floss

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Dr. Stephanie Vondrak focuses on the benefits of preventative dental care as well as tips for a better dental future. Since graduating from the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Dentistry in 2002, Dr. Vondrak has expanded her education and scope of care to include Temporomandibular joint therapy, analysis of head, neck and facial pain, bite stabilization, Invisalign and more. In her spare time, Dr. Vondrak enjoys going to the park with her two kids, practicing Pilates and yoga as well as spending time with her husband, Nick. See more at www.drondrak.com.

As a dentist, I see a lot of dirty mouths, and the "F word" can be a sensitive subject.

The "F word" known as flossing, that is.

Most of us know we're supposed to floss everyday. We've listened to our dentists and hygienists recite the same dialogue on flossing for years.

And let's be honest, we do floss ... twice a year, usually the night before our six month cleaning. So what's the big deal? Why is flossing so important?

Flossing is the **ONLY** effective way to remove harmful plaque from in-between teeth. It's important to understand what plaque is made of and why it's harmful in order to understand the importance of its removal.

In simple terms, plaque is a sticky combination of food particles, bacteria and saliva that easily adheres to our teeth. The bacteria in plaque consumes leftover food particles producing destructive acids. These acids deteriorate gum tissue and bone around our teeth. This is called Periodontal Disease. The acids also cause cavities and lead to dental decay.

Because bacteria are microscopic, the effects of these daily acids on our teeth are not visible until cavities, bleeding gums or broken dental work appear.

The good news: When practiced routinely with proper technique, you can learn to floss all of your teeth in a matter of minutes, effectively, once a day! This simple habit will prevent the harmful effects of plaque on your gums, bone and tooth structure. Your existing dental work will last longer, and you'll have a better dental future.

So remember, flossing doesn't have to be a cumbersome process. My favorite "F word"

can save hours and dollars in the dental chair.

Like anything else worthwhile, it does require a little effort and a few short minutes everyday. Still need convincing? Think of it this way: You only floss the teeth you wish to keep!