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Why Flossing Matters

Whenever you visit your dentist for a checkup, you can typically expect them to ask you about your oral care routine—are you brushing and flossing like you should be? For some of us, we can confidently (and truthfully) admit that we are brushing twice a day and flossing at least once a day. But for many of us, we've only got one of those two boxes checked. Most people follow the ADA's recommendation to brush twice per day, but flossing often falls by the wayside in our daily routine.

The problem is, well, flossing matters. It matters *a lot*. While brushing takes care of the top and outer surfaces of our teeth and gums, we need the interdental cleaning power of the floss to take care of the spaces between teeth, and the gap between the gums and the bottom of our teeth. Simply put, a toothbrush won't do much for these areas—it cannot reach them. Tartar and pieces of food stuck in these hard-to-reach places must be removed by flossing, or be left to wreak havoc on your oral health.

Some people may argue that they brush *and* use an antimicrobial mouthwash—so why do they still need to floss? While both brushing and mouthwash can be very effective, they still don't do the job that flossing does, and truthfully both become more effective when used in conjunction with flossing. If you begin your oral care routine by removing bits of food stuck between the teeth with floss, then your toothpaste and your mouthwash are able to get between the teeth to kill bacteria and prevent cavities from forming. However, if the food is left between the teeth, neither the toothpaste nor the mouthwash is going to be able to penetrate through it to do their job.

Flossing does a lot more than keep your mouth healthy—it can help keep your entire body healthy. Periodontal disease, or gum disease, has been linked to a number of other health complications, including the development of heart disease. Since proper and regular flossing goes a long way to helping to prevent gum disease from happening in the first place, it can literally help you to lower the risk of heart disease and other complications from arising. For something that takes just a couple of minutes every evening, it's one of the best things you can do to take care of your oral—and overall—health.

To learn more, visit <https://www.govparkdental.com/>.

Dr. Terry L. Brewick, DDS helps dental patients in the Governor's Park neighborhood of Denver, Colorado to stay happy and healthy!