

Fed up with floss?

*Get sore fingers?
Box keeps breaking?
Can't reach back teeth?
Fingers too big?*

Floss is probably not the best method of cleaning between your teeth for most adults.

We understand how much most patients get frustrated with using dental floss and for years we have been trying to persuade many of you to use interdental brushes. The ones we used to recommend were attached to a long handle and the major complaint was that the brushes bent and broke.

We now have the "Tepe" brushes. These have their own individual handle and come in a number of sizes-each with a different colour.

Christine is now able to match the size of the gaps between your teeth with the brushes. The tiny pink (Barbie) brushes are great for the younger patient who has small gaps between their teeth and the older patient whose front teeth are still tightly packed. Red and blue are the usual sizes and we can advise you which would be best.

It is so important to keep the spaces between your teeth clean, it prevents bleeding, infection and nasty smells from your gums as well as helping to prevent tooth decay which invariably occurs between the teeth in the adult.

Patients who have large spaces between their teeth or who have bridges will find that the really large brushes-yellow and purple are the best.

When you first start to use them you will experience quite a lot of bleeding and this can be off-putting. Persevere, and after about 4-5 days of using the brush once per day the bleeding and inflammation of the gums will reduce. The use of the brush then becomes easier. Sometimes we recommend the use of an antibacterial gel with the brush to speed the healing process.

We are gradually introducing the brushes to patients but don't hesitate to ask if we forget to mention them.

Dental ABC

Caries or dental /tooth Decay

Caries or 'tooth decay' is a disease of the hard structure of the teeth caused by various bacteria in the mouth. For caries to form, the bacteria which are present in PLAQUE need to have sugars from food, and need to be present long enough on the tooth surface to cause DEMINERALIZATION i.e. to cause a reduction in the amount of, for example, Calcium, in the structure of the tooth.

Once DEMINERALISATION has taken place, the bacteria can invade the tooth to deeper levels, and eventually a CAVITY or CARIES LESION may occur.

Dentists are usually able to detect the presence of caries by noticing changes in the appearance of your teeth, and by the use of light and X-RAY FILMS or RADIOGRAPHS. This is one of the reasons why dentists recommend regular check-ups; so they can advise you if caries is forming.

When this happens, you may need to have a FILLING or RESTORATION. At this practice we assess the severity of the caries, and the accessibility before deciding whether we must treat immediately with a filling or leave and treat preventatively with fluoride gel and ensure the patient is aware of the problem and show them how to intensively clean the area.

If caries is left untreated for a longer time, and the bacteria have invaded into the middle i.e. the PULP, of the tooth, you may even need to have a ROOT CANAL TREATMENT or EXTRACTION carried out.

You can do a lot at home to prevent caries forming in your teeth. Brushing your teeth correctly to remove plaque with a FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE, and cleaning between the teeth with interdental brushes, floss or dental sticks will help to reduce the amount of bacteria (PLAQUE) on your teeth. You can also try to reduce the amount, and the frequency of the sugars and sweet things you eat and drink, as this will also help prevent caries. It has been shown that regular brushing, the use of fluorides, and the reduction in quantity and frequency of sugar intake will all help to significantly reduce caries. If you need more information about CARIES and TOOTH DECAY please ask.