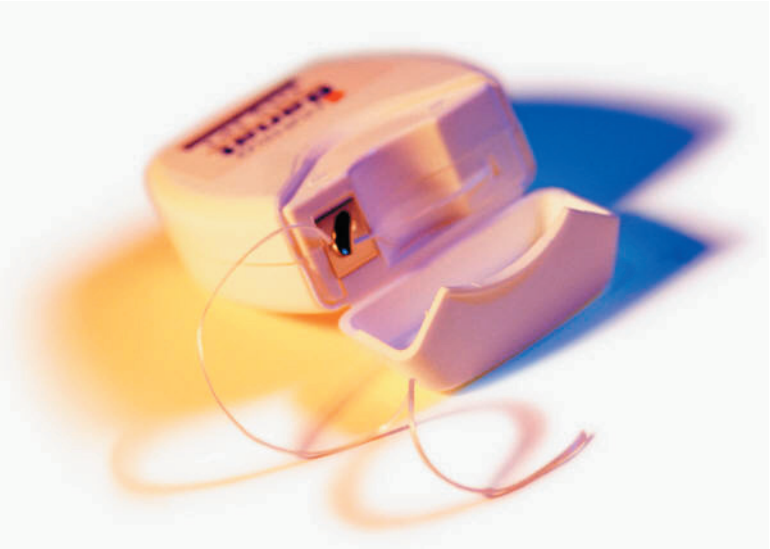
ORAL FITNESS FACT SHEET

Choose Your Weapon – Floss

Floss once a day for at least two or three minutes. Rinsing with mouthwash is not a substitute for flossing.



Flossing:

- Removes plaque (bacteria) and food particles that stick on and in between your teeth where a toothbrush can't reach.
- Prevents gingivitis (gum disease).

Any Floss Will Do

There are many types of floss, and some are flavored. They all clean well. Choose the one that most easily fits in between your teeth and is easy for you to hold.

- Woven floss is soft and gentle on sensitive gums.
- Waxed floss usually slides easier between tight teeth or tight fillings that fray regular floss.
- Gortex or Teflon floss is super slick and can get in between the tightest teeth.
- Wide floss or dental tape works well if you have a lot of bridgework.
- Use a floss threader, a pointed plastic loop, to help get floss underneath a bridge.

Flossing Safety

- For best control, wrap the end of the floss around your middle finger and use your index finger to guide the floss.
- Pull gently side to side to get the floss through the tight spots between your teeth, but be careful not to saw your gums!
- **Gently** move the floss up and down against the tooth in back, then against the tooth in front.
- Try to use a fresh section of floss for each area.

Your gums may bleed when you first start flossing every day. If bleeding continues to happen after a week or two of flossing, see your dentist.

USACHPPM Readiness thru Health
Directorate of Health Promotion and Wellness
http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/oralfitnessmain.aspx