

Brushing Up on Healthy Teeth: Quiz – True or False?

Keeping your teeth healthy sounds simple: Brush twice daily, floss, and see your dentist regularly. But there's more to it than that. Try this true-false quiz to see just how much you know about keeping your teeth their brightest, whitest, and healthiest.

1. You must brush and floss your teeth after every meal to prevent gum disease and cavities.

False. While it can't hurt, brushing after every meal is not absolutely necessary. A good rule of thumb is to brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste and floss at least once a day.

2. Brushing your teeth vigorously cleans your teeth most effectively.

False. A gentle back-and-forth pattern of short strokes removes plaque best. You should hold a soft brush with rounded bristles at a 45-degree angle to the gum line. Brush all surfaces of the tooth and up against the gum.

3. Flossing requires pulling the floss between your teeth and snapping it up against the gums.

False. Place the floss tightly against the side of each tooth and slide it up to the top edge and back down under the gum line. Never snap the floss against the gums. If you have tight spaces between your teeth, try floss coated with wax.

4. Oral Irrigators are an effective substitute for flossing.

False. While effective at removing stubborn food particles around orthodontic braces, oral irrigators do not remove plaque. Don't use oral irrigators as a substitute for brushing and flossing.

5. If your parents lost all of their teeth to tooth decay or gum disease, you will too.

False. Mouth and throat diseases, ranging from cavities to cancer, cause pain and disability for millions of Americans each year. Yet almost all oral diseases are largely preventable, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Brushing and flossing daily and visiting your dentist regularly are good ways to start.

6. Using a mouthwash can help to remove debris that your toothbrush and floss leave behind.

True. Using mouthwash can help to remove oral debris before or after brushing. Keep in mind, though, that this is not a substitute for brushing and flossing.

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