

FLOSS IT UP!

We smile and brush our teeth at least twice a day, but how often are you flossing? Floss removes food trapped between the teeth and the film of bacteria that forms there before it turns into plaque. Did you know that poor oral health can lead to many seemingly unrelated medical conditions? In fact, oral bacteria and oral disease have been linked to a variety of serious illnesses, **including heart disease**, diabetes, stroke and pregnancy complications. **The best floss out there is the floss that gets used!**

Having a healthy smile and mouth helps avoid certain health conditions such as gum disease. Gum disease can actually increase your risk for other serious health problems. The advanced form of gum disease, called periodontitis, causes tooth loss and is also sometimes associated with cardiovascular disease. Given the potential link between periodontitis and systemic health problems, preventing periodontitis may turn out to be an important step in maintaining your overall health. In most cases, this can be accomplished by practicing good daily oral hygiene, including brushing and flossing and regularly seeing a dentist two times a year or as recommended for cleaning. Click [here](#) for more information on improving your oral health.



TAKE ACTION

Awareness only goes so far toward improving your health—you also need to take action. Use this section to track your weekly progress as you establish your healthier lifestyle.

WEEK 1 (1/31-2/6) – CREATE A WELLNESS PLAN

What do you want to improve this month? Set a short-term health goal and a plan for achieving it.

WEEK 2 (2/7-2/13) – GET STARTED

Are you ready? Begin your plan and stick to it.

WEEK 3 (2/14-2/20) – LOOK FOR IMPROVEMENT

How are you doing? Think about what's working with your plan and if you need to adjust it.

WEEK 4 (2/21-2/27) – REFLECT

Did you reach your goal? Consider what worked with the plan and what should change next month.

AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Your heart is one of the hardest-working muscles in your body, but all that work can take a toll. Not treating your body right can quickly lead to serious heart issues, like heart disease. In fact, heart disease is one of the leading killers in the United States, accounting for 1 in 4 deaths annually.

Luckily, it doesn't take much to help your ticker. You can prevent heart disease by making healthy choices like eating balanced meals, exercising, quitting smoking and visiting your doctor regularly.

Speak with your doctor to discuss a heart-healthy regimen for you. For more information, click [here](#).

DID YOU KNOW?

Your heart beats 60 to 100 times a minute, pumping about 2,000 gallons of blood through your body every day.

