

# Healthy You

FAST FACTS FOR YOUR HEALTH

## **5 Items Your Hygienist recommends keeping handy**

Flashlight in a handy place in case you lose power? Tissues in the glove compartment of your car? You're probably ready to combat a number of everyday mishaps – but how's your preparedness when it comes to a healthy smile? Here are five things your hygienist would suggest that you have on hand.

### **Travel Toothpaste and Toothbrush**

This one may seem obvious, but do you have one on you now? Brushing your teeth after lunch or a particularly stinky snack can help thwart halitosis. But even without the threat of bad breath, adding impromptu brushing sessions can help stop plaque build-up and keep teeth sparkly.

### **Mirror**

You'll never have to wonder if you have spinach stuck between your teeth if you have a small mirror for quick check-ins. The selfie function on your smartphone's camera app also works well.

### **Floss**

Removing said piece of spinach from between your teeth is worth the small amount of space a spool of floss takes up in your purse or desk drawer. Getting rid of food debris and plaque also keeps tooth decay at bay – and it helps with fresh breath.

### **Healthy Snack**

You're less likely to grab a sugary treat if you have a healthy snack available. Whole fruits, nuts, seeds and beef jerky are all good options.

### **Sugar-Free Gum**

Sugar-free gum helps stimulate saliva, which rinses sugars and food from your teeth. Gum sweetened with xylitol is another good choice. Bonus: You can also pop a piece to distract you from habits that harm your teeth, such as tooth grinding or nail biting.

## Readers Ask, We Answer

**Lauren asks:** “I’ve noticed there are quite a few floss options available. Are any of them better than the tried-and-true spool of floss?”

**We answer:** Hi, Lauren. You’re right – there are many different floss types, and most serve different purposes. For example, waxed and unwaxed nylon flosses come in various widths and flavors. Monofilament floss tends not to shred as easily.

There are also Y- or U-shape plastic holders to help people who can’t wrap floss around their fingers. Extra-wide dental tape and floss threaders can be helpful for people with a lot of bridgework or wide gaps between their teeth. All these devices and floss types work equally well, as long as they are used at least once per day!

The best kind of floss to use is the one that’s most comfortable for you and addresses your specific dental needs. There’s nothing wrong with a good, old-fashioned spool of unwaxed nylon floss, if that’s what you prefer.

While it is helpful to read online about customer experiences with particular brands, it’s best to talk to your dentist about which type of floss is right for you. They are going to know best about the challenges you may encounter due to teeth spacing or gum sensitivity. And don’t be afraid to ask for samples!