

THE LINK BETWEEN ORAL HYGIENE AND HEALTH

by Thomas Smith

When considering the impact of oral hygiene on overall health, many wonder which practice - flossing, brushing, or regular dental visits - has the most significant benefits. Recent studies reveal that flossing your teeth at least once a week may not only improve oral health but also reduce the risk of serious health conditions like stroke and irregular heartbeat. Beyond protecting your gums and teeth, the simple act of flossing is linked to lower blood pressure, healthier cholesterol levels, and a reduced likelihood of diabetes.

Flossing at least once a week has been linked to remarkable benefits, particularly in reducing the risk of certain cardiovascular and neurological conditions:

- Lower Risk of Ischemic Stroke: Flossing weekly can reduce the risk of ischemic stroke by 21 percent. This type of stroke - the most common - occurs when a blood clot blocks a blood vessel in the brain. Moreover, flossing more frequently has been associated with an even greater reduction in risk.
- Reduced Risk of Cardioembolic Stroke: Flossing is associated with a 44 percent lower risk of cardioembolic stroke. This condition occurs when blood clots travel from the heart to the brain, potentially causing severe neurological damage.
- Lower Risk of Atrial Fibrillation (Afib): Regular flossing is linked to a 12 percent lower risk of developing atrial fibrillation, a condition characterized by an irregular heartbeat that can lead to blood clots, stroke, and heart failure.

Interestingly, the reduced risks associated with flossing appear to hold true regardless of whether individuals consistently brush their teeth or attend routine dental checkups. This suggests that flossing has a unique role in promoting health. However, it is worth noting that people who floss regularly often engage in other healthy habits, such as maintaining a balanced diet, exercising, and staying up to date with medical care. Therefore, it remains uncertain whether flossing alone accounts for the reduced stroke and heart risks or if it is part of a broader pattern of healthy living.

Flossing may seem like a small, routine task, but its potential health benefits extend far beyond oral hygiene. By removing plaque and reducing inflammation in the gums, flossing can help prevent harmful bacteria from entering the bloodstream. This reduction in systemic inflammation may contribute to better heart and brain health. Chronic gum disease, which is more likely without proper flossing, has been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

Unlike many health interventions, flossing is simple, affordable, and accessible to almost everyone. It doesn't require significant time or resources yet can have a profound impact on overall health. The act of flossing daily or even several times a week may help protect not just your teeth but also your heart and brain from

life-threatening conditions.

To integrate flossing into your routine, consider the following tips:

- Set a Reminder: Keep floss in a visible spot in your bathroom to remind you to floss at least once a day or several times a week.
- Use the Right Tools: If traditional floss is challenging, try alternatives like floss picks or water flossers.
- Combine with Other Healthy Habits: Incorporate flossing into a broader commitment to health, including regular exercise, a balanced diet, and routine medical checkups.

By taking a few minutes each week to floss, you can support not only your oral health but also your overall well-being. Protecting your heart and brain has never been easier or more cost-effective. Remember, small daily actions can lead to significant long-term benefits...

Wondering which oral hygiene behavior - dental flossing, brushing, or regular dentist visits - had the greatest impact on stroke prevention. Flossing your teeth at least once a week may reduce your risk of stroke and irregular heartbeat. Flossing is perhaps also linked to better overall health, including lower blood pressure, healthier cholesterol levels, and lower chances of diabetes...

flossing at least once a week was linked to the following benefits:

- 21 percent lower risk of ischemic stroke, the most common type of stroke, which happens when a blood clot blocks a blood vessel in the brain (Flossing more than once a week was associated with an even greater reduction in risk...
- 44 percent lower risk of cardioembolic stroke, which are blood clots traveling from the heart...
- 12 percent lower risk of afib, which can lead to blood clots in the heart and increase the risk of stroke and heart failure...

A lowered risk is associated with flossing whether or not people regularly brushed their teeth or got routine dental care. Although people who floss regularly often take better care of their health in general - eating well, exercising, and keeping up with medical care - so it's hard to say whether flossing itself lowers stroke risk, or if it's just part of an overall healthy lifestyle.

Flossing Is an Easy and Affordable Way to Improve Health. Flossing isn't just good for your teeth - it might help protect your heart and brain, too, it's a

simple, affordable way to improve oral health and possibly prevent serious heart and brain conditions as well.