

6 Dental Horror Stories That Will Turn You Into A Flosser For Good

Dentists dish on the grossest things they've seen in the mouths on non-flossers.

By Ashley Mateo January 2, 2018



Getty Images

You brush your teeth twice per day, so that means you're fine to skip flossing every once in a while (er, all of the time), right? Wrong.

Flossing, and doing so on the regular, is crucial to keeping your teeth and gums healthy. "The point of it is to remove the buildup of plaque between your teeth," says Maria

Lopez Howell, D.D.S, a spokesperson for the American Dental Association. “It’s like after you’ve eaten off a plate—you don’t just rinse it, you need to physically remove the film of food that’s on the plate.”

Hence why not flossing can lead to **bad breath**, cavities, infection, and gum inflammation and recession, says **Mazen Natour**, D.M.D., a Manhattan-based prosthodontist. In extreme cases, gum recession and disease can even lead to the teeth falling out completely.

And yet, a third of Americans admit that they don’t floss daily, according to an **analysis** of information from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES).

Meanwhile, more than a quarter of Americans admit to lying about their flossing habits to their dentists, a **survey** by the American Academy of Periodontology found. Uh, newsflash: If you’re not flossing, **your dentist will know** —most likely because of excessive plaque buildup or bleeding gums. Trust us, when it comes to teeth-cleaning, dentists have seen it all.

Here, dentists share some stories of the most seriously gross teeth they've ever seen as a result of not flossing. Prepare to cringe—and *finally* pick up that floss.

Two-Week Old Candy Wrapper

“I had a patient in his early twenties come in once complaining that his **tooth was aching**. When I looked into his mouth, I was confused by a silver filling, which looked kind of off. After closer examination, I realized it was a remnant of a **candy bar** wrapper that was lodged in between his back molars. When I asked how recently he had eaten that candy bar, he admitted it was probably two weeks ago. I used dental floss to remove it and then gave him a lesson on flossing and the importance of doing it daily to remove all foreign objects from his teeth.” — *Gary Glassman*, D.D.S.

Related: **5 Body Odors You Should Never Ignore**

Superglued Teeth

“I had a patient who liked DIY projects significantly more than daily flossing. So by the time he was in his early fifties, he had to make a choice between committing to his **oral hygiene** or risk losing all of his teeth. Instead, he came up with the idea of putting his DIY background to use. He had severe gum disease from not flossing and his teeth were loose and shifting around, so he decided to *superglue* all of his remaining teeth together! The goal was to make a big blob of teeth that wouldn't move so much. The superglued blob of teeth stayed in his mouth for a little longer, and when I saw him, unfortunately, all of his teeth needed to come out.” — *Richard J. Weber*, D.M.D.

Falling-Out Teeth

"I've seen so much tartar and plaque build up from neglecting to floss that a calculus bridge [of hardened plaque] forms [between the teeth]. A lady came into my office once who had such severe tartar buildup that there were no gums around her teeth—it was only the tartar keeping her teeth in place. Once the buildup was removed, two of her teeth actually fell out." —*Glassman*

Related: [This Video Of A Blackhead Removal From Inside Of An Ear Is Disgusting \(But You Won't Be Able To Look Away\)](#)

'What's That Smell?'

"One time, I was flossing a patient who admitted to rarely ever flossing. After a few teeth, he stopped me and asked what the terrible smell was. I showed him the chunks on the floss and explained to him that it was the decaying food stuck between his teeth that I removed with the floss. After that experience, the lightbulb went off and he became a dedicated flosser for life." —*Diana D'Aoust, D.D.S.*

Crusted-On Teeth

"The worst case of not flossing I'd ever seen was in someone who had a removable partial denture. You're supposed to take it out every night, but this person did not do that. They had so much buildup between the teeth that they actually couldn't remove the denture—it was almost cemented in by the amount of buildup they had. We actually have to remove all the buildup first in order to remove the denture, *then* we were able to begin the process of cleaning things up." —*Lopez Howell*

Related: [7 Dentists Share the Most Horrifying Things They've Ever Seen at Work](#)

Leftovers

"One of my patients came in for an appointment and while I was looking around her mouth, I found some leftover green food in her teeth. This is actually pretty common when patients come into the office after eating a meal and don't floss first, so I decided to make a light joke and asked her, 'how was the broccoli that you had for lunch today?' The patient just looked at me with a blank face and said, 'I didn't have anything green today.' And I said, 'Yes, you did. It's right here,' and proceeded to show her the pretty sizable piece of broccoli I had dislodged from the back portion of her mouth. I could see she was thinking about it as she looked at the piece of food and then her face lit up with recognition. 'Oh, yeah, I had broccoli with my dinner five days ago!' she said. And that is why you should always floss after you eat!" —*Jeffrey Golden, D.D.S.*