

## Tooth Brushing and Flossing

By Dr. Jack Fletcher

Brushing and flossing correctly are vital to having healthy gums. Poor oral hygiene habits will lead to gingivitis and then progress to gum disease. Cavities are also related to inadequate brushing and flossing.

**My recommended oral hygiene routine is as follows:**

- 1.** Floss your teeth first. Concentrate on flossing just one tooth at a time by pushing the floss towards that tooth and then slide the floss up and down. Next move the floss up and over the little hump of gum tissue and use the same technique on the adjacent tooth. You should see the floss slide below the gums by a couple of millimeters. You can rinse now if you like. Flossing in this way will help to clean the gums and the tooth contact areas.
- 2.** Brush with a toothpaste containing fluoride by angling the toothbrush bristles towards the gums and then move the brush in small circles. The ideal angle seems to be forty five degrees. Only try to brush one to two teeth at a time. Brushing this way should take 3 – 4 minutes for an adult set of teeth and 2 minutes for a child's set. I use a Sonicare Flexcare brush which moves the brush at 30,000 cycle per minute, so all I need to do is slowly move the brush along the teeth and gums, but I still angle the brush the same . The ultrasonic brushes clean incredibly well.
- 3.** Lastly, spit out the excess toothpaste and walk away. You are done. Cleaning teeth this way will leave a bit of fluoridated toothpaste in between the teeth and at the gum line which are the two most cavity prone areas on a tooth.