

## Flossing your teeth could reduce the risk of stroke

6th February 2025



Dental hygiene (looking after your teeth and gums) is good for you. It keeps your teeth healthy, and it can help your brain. New research from the University of South Carolina suggests that flossing your teeth could reduce the risk of having a stroke. A

stroke is like a heart attack, but it affects the brain. It happens when blood cannot get to the brain, or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. Around 15 million people worldwide have a stroke each year. Of these, about 5 million die, and 5 million are left disabled. Researcher Dr Souvik Sen said oral diseases, such as tooth decay and gum disease, affect around 3.5 billion people. He said these diseases are the most widespread health problems.

Dr Sen and his team of researchers looked into the effects of flossing on our health. He said: "We aimed to determine which oral hygiene behavior - dental flossing, brushing or regular dentist visits - has the greatest impact on stroke prevention." The team found that flossing teeth at least once a week could lower the risk of different types of stroke by 22 per cent to 44 per cent. Dr Sen said flossing could reduce the risk of stroke "by reducing oral infections". He added that flossing was a cheap and easy way of caring for your teeth and body. He said: "Many people have said that dental care is costly. Flossing is a healthy habit that is easy, affordable and accessible."

Sources: [nypost.com](https://nypost.com) / [health.com](https://health.com) / [the-independent.com](https://the-independent.com)

### Writing

Dental floss should be given to everyone for free. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

dental / hygiene / teeth / gums / brain / risk / stroke / blood / disabled / diseases / flossing / health / brushing / dentist visits / cheap / body / dental care / healthy habit

### True / False

- 1) The article says flossing helps your head and keeps your smile healthy. T / F
- 2) A stroke is similar to a heart attack for the brain. T / F
- 3) About 15 million people a year die from stroke. T / F
- 4) Tooth decay and gum disease affects 3.5 billion people. T / F
- 5) Researchers looked into the effects of health on flossing. T / F
- 6) Researchers say flossing once a day reduces the risk of stroke by 44%. T / F
- 7) The article says flossing is expensive. T / F
- 8) The article says flossing is easy and accessible. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. <b>hygiene</b>     | a. examined    |
| 2. <b>risk</b>        | b. splits open |
| 3. <b>bursts</b>      | c. convenient  |
| 4. <b>tooth decay</b> | d. find out    |
| 5. <b>widespread</b>  | e. possibility |
| 6. <b>looked into</b> | f. diseases    |
| 7. <b>determine</b>   | g. cavities    |
| 8. <b>reduce</b>      | h. cleanliness |
| 9. <b>infections</b>  | i. cut         |
| 10. <b>accessible</b> | j. extensive   |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How regularly do you floss?
- c) For how many minutes should we brush our teeth?
- d) How important are straight, white teeth?
- e) What do you think of the cost of dental care?
- f) What problems have you had with your teeth?
- g) Has this article changed your opinion of flossing?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

## Phrase Match

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. looking after your teeth | a. is costly             |
| 2. reduce the risk          | b. decay                 |
| 3. blood                    | c. health problems       |
| 4. tooth                    | d. on stroke prevention  |
| 5. the most widespread      | e. vessel                |
| 6. the greatest impact      | f. habit                 |
| 7. flossing teeth at        | g. and gums              |
| 8. a cheap and easy way of  | h. least once a week     |
| 9. dental care              | i. of having a stroke    |
| 10. Flossing is a healthy   | j. caring for your teeth |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of flossing?
- How important is dental hygiene?
- What do you do to look after your teeth?
- What do you know about strokes?
- Are you happy with your teeth?
- What problems can people have with their teeth?
- Do you ever get tooth decay?
- What do you think of going to the dentist?

## Spelling

- Dental ehigney
- A stroke is like a rehta attack
- a dolbo vessel in the brain bursts
- 5 million are left ildsadbe
- tooth cedya
- these dsiseeas are the most widespread
- urgarel dentist visits
- the greatest impact on stroke poverennti
- different syept of stroke
- eeucdr the risk of stroke
- reducing oral fictoinesn
- Flossing is a healthy athbi

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. b	4. g	5. j
6. a	7. d	8. i	9. f	10. c

## Role Play

### Role A – Tooth Decay

You think tooth decay is the biggest dental problem. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their problems aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): gum disease, bad breath or stained teeth.

### Role B – Gum Disease

You think gum disease is the biggest dental problem. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their problems aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): tooth decay, bad breath or stained teeth.

### Role C – Bad Breath

You think bad breath is the biggest dental problem. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their problems aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): gum disease, tooth decay or stained teeth.

### Role D – Stained Teeth

You think stained teeth is the biggest dental problem. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their problems aren't so bad. Also, tell the others which is the least worrying of these (and why): gum disease, bad breath or tooth decay.

## Speaking – Dental Problems

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest problems at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| • Tooth decay   | • Toothaches           |
| • Gum disease   | • Cracked teeth        |
| • Stained teeth | • Grinding one's teeth |
| • Bad breath    | • Abscess              |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	F	4	T	5	F	6	F	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.