



FLASH!

AUGUST 5, 2016

The Efficacy of Flossing

Dear ODA Dentist:

There have been several Canadian news reports about a U.S. story questioning the efficacy of flossing, citing the lack of evidence supporting the practice. The story was initially published by the [Associated Press](#) and has been carried by media sources across Canada. Here is what you need to know.

- This is a national issue that requires a unified approach across the profession. We are working with our partners – provincial dental associations and the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) – in responding to this. Dr. Larry Levin, ODA Past-President and President-Elect of the Canadian Dental Association appeared on [CTV](#), [CBC](#) and other outlets.

- The CDA issued a statement on August 2:

The Canadian Dental Association supports flossing as one step of maintaining healthy teeth and gums. Flossing is an effective preventative measure to remove plaque, the main cause of gum disease. The weakness of the evidence supporting the value of floss in the prevention of gum disease is a reflection of the difficulty of conducting the necessary studies, not of the value of flossing for the maintenance of good oral health.

Brushing, flossing, eating a healthy diet, and seeing your dentist regularly are all steps in preserving a healthy mouth.

- The [American Dental Association](#) has also issued a statement in support of interdental cleaners and regular dental visits.
- Here are some key messages you can relay to your patients:
 - Cleaning between your teeth removes plaque from areas your toothbrush can't reach. Plaque build-up contributes to tooth decay and gum disease.
 - Let's talk about what types of dental-care products will be most effective for your individual needs and the proper techniques for each.
 - Cleaning between your teeth is just one part of a maintaining good oral health, along with brushing twice a day, eating a nutritious diet and seeing your dentist regularly.