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Committed to our patients

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Response to recent media reports on flossing

Reports recently aired by some media sources question the effectiveness of flossing in reducing dental decay and gum disease. The controversy began when the US Department of Agriculture quietly dropped any mention of flossing from its dietary guidelines for Americans. The deletion of flossing from its guidelines resulted from reports that current scientific research failed to adequately support the claims of prevention afforded by the act of flossing.

Our response to this issue is based on several decades of personal clinical observation. We firmly believe that dental offices throughout the United States provide a rich research laboratory in which the outcomes of millions of patient interactions form definite clinical protocols.

The microenvironment of the human mouth is an easy breeding ground for many forms of bacteria. Studies reveal the potential deleterious effects of those bacteria both locally in the mouth and the correlation to other systemic diseases. The removal of those bacterial colonies which reside in soft plaque which forms on the tooth surfaces is critical in minimizing the negative effects of the bacteria.

Flossing is not a cure for these bacteria; rather it is one of many tools available for removing plaque from teeth. The key is that in order to remove bacteria effectively those tools, including floss, must be used properly. That is exactly why you receive education on proper techniques at each hygiene visit.

On a daily basis, this office observes the effects of improper plaque removal. The signs of local inflammation in non-flossers are evident and studies easily demonstrate the potential negative effects of inflammation.

We will continue to suggest that proper flossing be one part of your recommended oral care routine.