

TOOTHFULLY. *speaking*



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Flossing goes viral!

IN MY WILDEST dreams, I could not have imagined so many people discussing flossing in restaurants, over a latte, in yoga class and in pubs! I feel compelled to shed some light and respond this month to the most humblest

of dental preventions when long time patients and my own children question the need to floss!

On the one hand, the Associated Press is correct that the research on flossing is dated and was executed with the scientific standards of the 1950s and 60s and provides no clear benefit to flossing alone vs toothbrushing. But what is clear is that:

- a)** One cannot assess and evaluate research done 70+ years ago according to today's scientific research standards - it is akin to comparing rotary dial phones to the capability of today's smart phones - totally unfair and ridiculous on so many different levels
- b)** Secondly, the main critic of the data admits to using interproximal piks as his main oral hygiene device (which is a perfectly viable option)
- c)** When something so common sense and understood from a clinical standpoint as evidenced from every dental professional's viewpoint as "the truth" then what is the value of spending millions of dollars to prove the obvious? to satisfy the AP? A proof of point study was published by the British Medical Journal in 2003 on the value of randomized controlled studies. The paper concluded that "there are no randomized controlled studies to prove that jumping out of a airplane at 25,000ft without a parachute is unsafe". Similarly, one could then conclude that using a parachute for this purpose is unnecessary. This is how ridiculous the conclusions from the AP are.

Every one of the 25 flossing studies quoted are antiquated and today we periodontists approach the hypothesis from a different perspective of "what is the downfall of not flossing"?

Well my practice is full of those that had early intervention of flossing and home care through education - those people maintain their teeth longer - obviously!

Then the other half of my practice is full of those that had NO early intervention of flossing and home care and now I am replacing their teeth with implants which actually have to be flossed!

So one must decide whether you want to floss your teeth and keep them or floss your implants that replaced them and protect them from the same disease that was responsible for tooth loss. Either way, stop viewing floss as your enemy! Floss or any interproximal device removes debris in between your teeth and the only other way is visiting your dental hygienist!



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