CDHA position statement: Interdental brushing

On February 25, 2014, the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) Board of Directors endorsed the following position statement on interdental brushing and the practice guideline, “Interdental Brushing or Flossing: Self-Care Recommendations for Clients with Interdental Inflammation.”

POSITION STATEMENT

Interdental self-care is important for disrupting the oral biofilm and maintaining oral health. The use of an interdental brush is an effective alternative to dental floss in achieving interproximal health by eliminating both plaque and bleeding. When assessing a client's ability and motivation for daily interdental self-care, it is recommended that the practitioner consider the following factors:

1. The client's preferences
2. The cost and availability of the product
3. The intraoral anatomy, such as the presence of fixed prostheses and orthodontics, and the anatomy of embrasure space

CDHA recommends that further research be undertaken to

- develop an accurate and reliable index for assessing interproximal dental plaque. This is particularly important in assessing Type 1 embrasures where visibility is limited and for incorporating the recent developments in oral biofilm maturation and its effects on gingival inflammation.
- investigate other interdental aids’ effectiveness in Type 1 embrasures as viable alternatives to dental floss for clients who lack dexterity.
- study long-term compliance with and effectiveness of interdental aids to address the Hawthorne effect on the short-term results.
- study long-term unintended outcomes and/or consequences of interdental brush use on hard and soft tissues.

Endnote


BIBLIOGRAPHY


NOTE

This position statement considered research studies that compared interdental brushing with the use of dental floss. The research papers selected did not compare interdental brushing with other interdental devices.
Interdental Brushing or Flossing: Self-Care Recommendations for Clients with Interdental Inflammation

Client with interdental inflammation

Clinical signs:
- redness
- swelling
- soft interdental papilla
- bleeding (with or without stimulation)
- plaque (visible or not)
All are related to plaque biofilm, gingivitis and/or periodontitis

Assess client’s level of ability

ADEQUATE ability

Assess motivation

HIGH motivation

Assess intraoral anatomy

Type I embrasure

Recommend dental floss

LIMITED ability

LIMITED motivation

Type II embrasure

Type III embrasure*

All embrasure types

Recommend interdental brush

* Photo courtesy Sherry Saunderson