

Simple Invention: Dental Floss

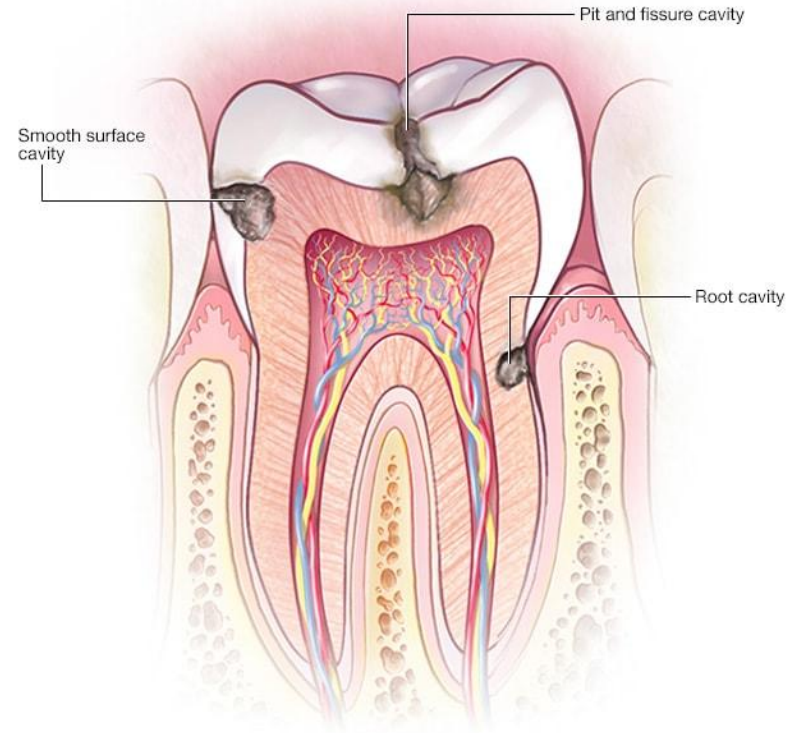
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The Problem

Basic teeth brushing couldn't reach in between teeth

Food and plaque was getting stuck in between teeth which could cause cavities and your teeth could degrade

Affected most people who could afford basic hygiene



The Solution: Process and Mechanics

Horse hair was used as the first type of dental floss

In 1815, Dr. Levi Spear Parmly, a dentist in New Orleans, advised his patients to floss after every appointment with waxed silken thread

To use floss, you file the string between your teeth scraping the sides of both your teeth. This picks up the plaque left behind



The Solution: Invention

1882: unwaxed silken thread was mass produced by the Codman and Shurtleff Company and used as dental floss

1898: The official invention of dental floss (unwaxed silk thread) was patented by Johnson & Johnson



The Solution: Problems

The biggest challenge was using the best material

1940s: Silk was replaced with nylon during WWII because silk became too rare and in demand

Nylon was also stronger than silk and less prone to breakage

Now, Gore-Tex is a common material for floss

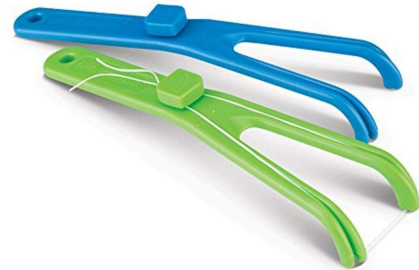
Synthetic waterproof fabric

Outcomes

Today, dental floss is still used daily by people of all ages

There have even been some improvements to its use such as the floss holder which makes it easier to use

Dental floss could be improved if it was recyclable. Everyone uses dental floss which causes a lot of trash build up



Conclusion

This invention is so genius because it's small and convenient, yet it solves a big hygiene problem

Plus, by keeping your teeth clean, this avoids future cavities and therefore, future medical bills

Works Cited

<http://www.kidsgreatsmiles.com/blog/horse-hair-the-strange-history-of-dental-floss/>

<https://oralb.com/en-us/oral-health/dental-floss-history/>