

Just the Facts...

Field Oral Hygiene

Prevent tooth decay and gum disease by maintaining good oral hygiene in the field. Toothbrush, toothpaste and dental floss are available in the Health and Comfort Pack (HCP), Type I (NSN 8970-01-368-9154).

Your risk of tooth decay increases in the field:

- Rations have a high amount of starch and sugar.
- Bacteria in your mouth use starches and sugar to produce acids that cause tooth decay.
- Not brushing for just a few days can cause gingivitis (bleeding gums).
- If gum disease already exists, it can worsen.



Failure to clean the mouth can result in tooth decay, bad breath and swollen, painful, bleeding gums such as these.
Photo courtesy of Carl Allen, D.D.S.



Field-friendly flossing

Flossing cleans the areas between the teeth and under the gums where brushing cannot reach. Floss to prevent decay and gum disease.

- Floss once per day, before brushing.
- Use 12-18 inches of floss.
- Wrap the ends of the floss around your middle fingers.
- Use your index fingers to guide it between your teeth.

Field-friendly brushing

You can brush without running water and a sink. Keep a small toothbrush with a ventilated cover in your pocket.

- Brush at least twice a day, especially before sleeping.
- Apply fluoridated toothpaste to the toothbrush and brush all the surfaces of your teeth with a circular motion.
- No toothpaste? Brush anyway.
- Brush your tongue and the roof of your mouth.



- Pour a small amount of water (about ½ cup) from your canteen over the bristles to rinse them.
- **DO NOT rinse, eat or drink** anything for at least 30 minutes after brushing. The fluoride will stay on your teeth longer and protect them better.
- No toothbrush? Swish with water after eating. Wrap a piece of cloth around your finger and wipe the surfaces of your teeth.

