

3 days: 15- to 20-minute lessons

Day 1:

Teaching Guides

Brushing, Flossing and Rinsing

Children learn easy, everyday ways to prevent tooth decay

Time to complete: 5 minutes

Group size: entire class

Fluoride, Checkups and Healthy Eating

Children learn simple steps to a lifetime of good dental health

Time to complete: 5 minutes

Group size: Entire class

Worksheet

Review What You Know About Healthy Teeth

Children fill in ten blank spaces to finish sentences about healthy teeth.

National Academic Standards: English: Vocabulary, Language Conventions

Time to complete: 10 minutes

Day 2:

Teaching Guide

Facts About Teeth

Children learn an assortment of background information about teeth

Time to complete: 5 minutes

Group size: Entire class

Worksheet

Parts of a Tooth/Tools in a Dentist's Office

Name the parts of a tooth, then name tools in the dentist's office.

Time to complete: 15 minutes

Day 3:

Activity

Flossing Practice With an Egg Carton

Reinforce the importance of flossing while students learn and practice proper flossing technique.

Time to complete: 20 minutes

Group size: Small groups or entire class

Recommended book: "The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist" By Stan and Jan Berenstain

Brushing, Flossing and Rinsing

Everyday Ways to Prevent Tooth Decay

Brushing

- Dentists recommend a child-sized toothbrush with soft bristles.
- Use a pea-size amount of fluoride toothpaste with cavity protection that is also gentle on enamel, and spit out the remaining toothpaste when finished brushing. Children under 2 years should consult a dentist prior to use of fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush at least **twice a day**, morning and bedtime, for about 2 minutes each time.
- Toothpaste works with a combination of fluoride to help repair and strengthen tooth enamel; gentle abrasives (such as silica) to help remove stains and plaque, and polish teeth; detergents (such as sodium lauryl sulfate) to create a foaming action that makes brushing easier; and other ingredients to help whiten teeth, freshen breath, etc.

Flossing

- Helps remove plaque between teeth and below the gum line, and also helps prevent gingivitis, an early form of gum disease.
- Children should floss as soon as their teeth begin to touch.
- Until about age 8, most children need parents' help because they don't have the dexterity to floss. A plastic-handled "flosser" can make it easier.
- Floss regularly.

Rinsing

- An antimicrobial rinse can kill germs that cause plaque, gingivitis and bad breath. Rinsing for 30 seconds, twice a day, can kill more plaque than brushing alone.
- A fluoride rinse can help strengthen teeth and prevent cavities.
- Children 6-12 years of age can use a rinse with adult supervision. Always read and follow the directions for the mouthrinse that you use.
- After rinsing, spit the rinse in the sink (don't swallow it).
- Rinse should be used in conjunction with brushing and flossing.

How to Brush



Brush the outer tooth surface of 2-3 teeth at a time along the gumline using a gentle circular motion. Move brush to the next group of 2-3 teeth and repeat.



Brush the insides of the front teeth by tilting the brush vertically; use the "toe" of the brush (the front half) with gentle, short up-and-down strokes.



On the chewing surfaces hold the brush flat and use a gentle scrubbing motion. Don't forget to brush the top of your tongue to remove bacteria that can cause bad breath.

How to Floss



Hold the floss between your thumbs and forefingers. Leave about 1" of floss between your hands.



Gently work the floss between your teeth. When you reach the gumline, curve into a "C" shape around the tooth, making sure to go below the gumline.



Gently glide the floss up and down several times between each tooth, including your back teeth. Apply pressure against the tooth while flossing. Unwind new floss as needed.

When Using a Flosser



Guide floss between teeth using a gentle back-and-forth motion. Move up and down against tooth to remove plaque and food (repeat for each tooth). Discard after use.

Fluoride, Checkups and Healthy Eating

For a Lifetime of Good Dental Health

Fluoride

- A mineral that helps strengthen tooth enamel — and repair damaged enamel.
- Helps enhance tooth strength with the body's own minerals, such as calcium.
- Protects teeth from acid attack.
- Inhibits bacteria in plaque from producing acid.
- Children can get fluoride through:
 - Water
 - Fluoride supplements (usually tablets)
 - Professional fluoride treatments
 - Fluoride gels, rinses, toothpastes



Dental Checkups

Ideally, children should visit a dentist:

- Within 6 months of the eruption of their first baby tooth.
- Then twice a year or as recommended by the child's dentist.

At a checkup, the dentist and/or dental hygienist will:

- Examine the child's mouth for early signs of decay or other problems.
- Monitor tooth growth.
- Clean the teeth.
- If necessary, strengthen the teeth with a fluoride treatment.
- Dentists sometimes recommend sealants — clear plastic coatings over the chewing surfaces of back teeth, where decay most often occurs. Sealants shield uneven surfaces from food and plaque.

If children are anxious about going to the dentist, you can ease their fears with a few simple facts:

- Dentists and dental hygienists are friendly people who help to keep teeth healthy.
- Explain what happens at a dental checkup and why.
- Explain the instruments and equipment the dentist might use in the office.
- Explain why dentists and hygienists wear gloves and masks.
- Ask a local dentist or hygienist to visit your class.

Healthy Eating

Snacks – Sugars and starches can contribute to tooth decay. Encourage students to:

- Limit the number of snacks they eat.
- Choose nutritious snacks such as raw vegetables, fruits and low-fat cheese.
- Limit sugary sodas and sports drinks. Note: Snacking or sipping on sugary food or drink over extended periods of time throughout the day can be especially harmful.

Name _____

Review What You Know About Healthy Teeth

Fill in the blanks. Use the Word Bank to find your answers.

Word Bank: **day** **rinse** **sugar** **chewing** **dentist**
minutes **twice** **pea** **baby** **vegetables**

1. Losing your _____ teeth is a normal part of growing up.
2. You should brush your teeth _____ a day.
3. You should floss every _____.
4. A special _____ can kill germs in your mouth that brushing and flossing might miss.
5. The _____ in sweets and soda can cause cavities in your teeth.
6. When you brush use a little bit of toothpaste, about the size of a _____.
7. Visit your _____ for regular checkups.
8. Brush the outsides, the insides and the _____ sides of all your teeth.
9. Brush your teeth for about two _____.
10. Eat lots of _____ to help make your teeth strong.

Facts About Teeth Background Information for Educators

Parts of a Tooth

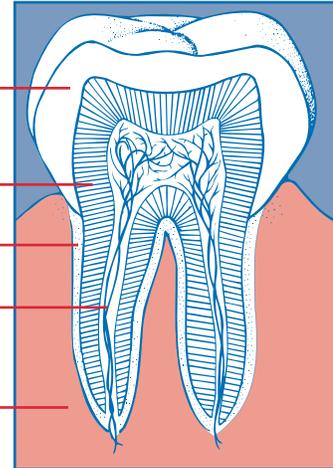
Enamel: Exceptionally hard outer layer that covers the crown, the section of tooth above the gumline.

Dentin: Hard tissue that forms the body of the tooth.

Cementum: Bone-like tissue that covers the root.

Pulp: "Living Core" in the center of the tooth, contains nerves and blood vessels.

Gum Tissue: Soft tissue which covers and protects roots of teeth and surrounding bone.



Primary ("Baby") Teeth

Begin to form before birth.

Start to erupt through the gums around 6 to 7 months. Most children have 20 primary teeth by age 3.

Important for chewing, speech, appearance, and as spacers for permanent teeth.

At 6 to 7 years, the first primary tooth roots begin to dissolve; then teeth loosen and fall out to make room for permanent teeth.

Back teeth serve as foundation for jaw development; remain for 9 to 12 years.

Some children are frightened when they begin to lose their primary teeth. They can be reassured that losing their "baby teeth" is a natural part of growing up, and that new, permanent teeth will quickly replace the teeth they lose.

Permanent Teeth

Most people eventually have 32 permanent teeth, including wisdom teeth.



8 Incisors – "front teeth," like chisels, to cut food



4 Cuspids – next to Incisors, pointed to tear food



8 Bicuspids – between Cuspids and Molars, like nutcrackers, to crush food



12 Molars – rear of mouth, like mortars and pestles, to grind food

Plaque and Decay

Plaque — A nearly colorless film on teeth, contains acid-producing bacteria that cause decay.

- Each time we eat foods with sugar or starch, these bacteria produce acids that attack tooth enamel for at least 20 minutes.

Decay — After repeated attacks, a hole (or cavity) can form through dissolved enamel. You can help prevent decay and cavities through:

- Daily brushing, flossing and rinsing
- Healthy eating
- Regular dental checkups

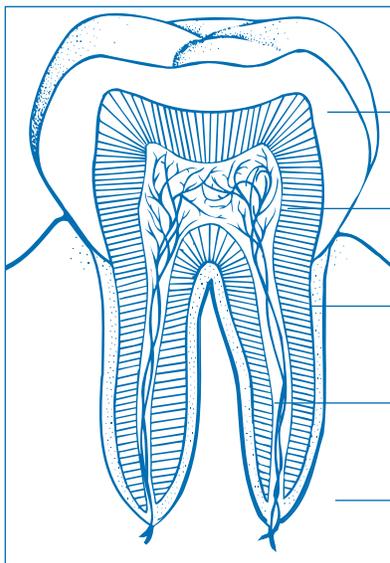


Name _____

Parts of a Tooth

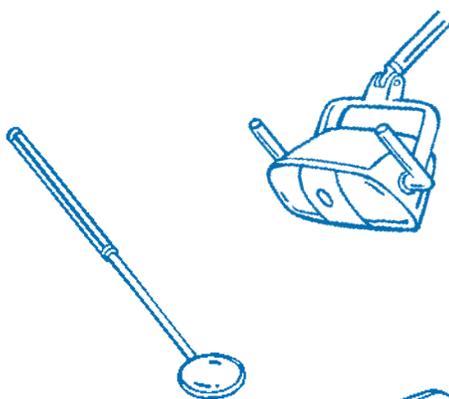
Use the Word Bank to name the parts of a tooth.

Word Bank: enamel cementum pulp gum tissue dentin

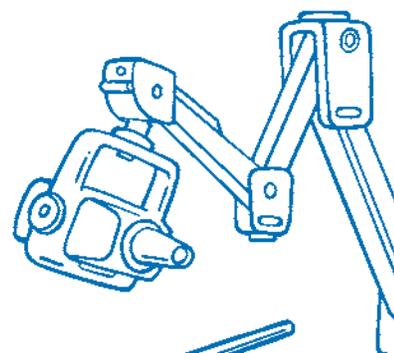
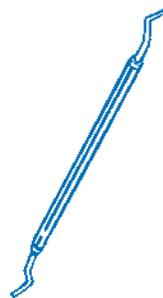


Tools in the Dentist's Office

Draw a line to match the name of each tool with its picture.



exam chair
special light
cleaning tool
mirror



x-ray machine
water-spray hose
mask



Flossing Practice

Activity

Reinforce the importance of flossing while students learn and practice proper flossing technique. Enlist students' help to collect foam egg cartons – one carton for every two students. Cut off the carton lids; then cut the bottom of each carton in half lengthwise to create two rows of six egg-carton “teeth.” Give each student a row of “teeth,” an 18-inch length of floss or yarn, and two pieces of tape to secure each end of his/her “teeth” to the desktop. Demonstrate:

1. How to wrap the floss around the middle finger of each hand.
2. How to hold the floss with the index fingers and thumbs.
3. How to guide the floss gently between “teeth,” then pull the floss up, down and around to clean both sides of the teeth and the gum area. Send the egg-carton “teeth” home for continued practice and challenge students to practice on their real teeth, too!

Learning Objective

Reinforces students' understanding of how humans use our teeth while they learn more about the animal world

Materials

Foam egg cartons (one carton for every two students); dental floss or yarn; transparent or masking tape.

Preparation Time

30 minutes to gather materials and cut egg cartons.

Group Size

Small groups or class.