

Infant Lesson Plan 3

Dental Health

Objective

To develop pupils' understanding of dental care and the importance of a healthy balanced diet for good dental health.

Duration: **30 minutes** (approximately).



Curricular Links

SPHE:

Myself → Taking care of my body → Knowing about my body / Food and nutrition

Words of the Day

Teeth – Hard and bony structures in the jaw which help us to eat and talk.

Gums – Gums protect the bone and roots of your teeth.

Enamel – Enamel is the hard outer layer of the tooth which covers and protects your teeth.

Tooth Decay – When we eat or drink something that contains sugar, the enamel on our teeth begins to break down. This causes tooth decay.



Class Discussion

Inform pupils that you will be learning about taking care of teeth and gums.

Ask pupils to:

- Point to their teeth and gums.
- Explain what they understand by the words 'teeth' and 'gums' (refer to Words of the Day section).
- Discuss why they think taking care of teeth is important, for example:
 - Not looking after our teeth can give us toothache, tooth decay and sore gums.
 - Looking after your teeth when you are young is a great start to having good strong teeth when you are older.
 - Teeth are important for eating, talking and smiling.

Explain tooth decay (see words of the day for definition). Luckily, the mouth has its own built-in defence against tooth decay. About 20 minutes after eating or drinking something sugary, if no more sugar is taken, the acid begins to neutralise and the tooth surface is restored to normal. This is why it is important not to eat sugary drinks or snacks between meals.

Ask pupils to think about ways they can look after their teeth and gums. Draw a spider diagram on the board of pupils' ideas.

Prompts for discussion:

- Eat healthy meals and snacks.
- The best drinks for healthy teeth are water and milk.
- Include foods that are sources of calcium, which helps to keep teeth healthy, e.g. products like milk, natural yogurt and cheese (low-fat varieties recommended).
- Try not to eat sugary snacks such as sweets, chocolate, biscuits and sugary drinks. Snacking on foods which have lots of sugar can lead to tooth decay.
- Clean your gums and teeth properly.
- Brush your teeth twice daily.



Pair Discussion

Read aloud the following questions about dental care and ask pupils to discuss each question briefly with a partner, then discuss as a class (answers in brackets below).

- 1 How often do you think you should brush your teeth every day? (Twice a day)
- 2 How should you brush your teeth? (Procedure outlined below)
- 3 How long should you brush your teeth for? (2-3 minutes)

Outline procedure for brushing teeth:

- Get help to brush your teeth.
- Brush two teeth at a time (width of the toothbrush head).
- Count to ten for every two teeth you brush.
- Brush gums and teeth with a toothbrush and pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste (at least 1,000 ppm) in a gentle circular motion. (See pictures)
- Brush top and bottom teeth.
- Brush outside of teeth and gums, inside of teeth and gums and biting surface.
- Spit out after brushing – no rinsing.



Personal Activity

Give each pupil a copy of the **'Top Tooth Tips'** activity sheet. Discuss each of the illustrated 8 tips. Ask pupils to listen as you discuss each tip and to put the correct number (from 1 to 8) in the answer box.

Then ask pupils to illustrate their favourite tip.

Top Tooth Tips

- 1 Always brush your teeth twice a day, at bedtime and one other time during the day.
- 2 Use a toothbrush and toothpaste to brush your teeth. Clean every tooth.
- 3 Brushing your teeth properly should take 2-3 minutes (about the length of a song).
- 4 Spit, don't rinse.
- 5 Never eat or swallow toothpaste.
- 6 Change your toothbrush when the bristles are worn, about every three months.
- 7 Get help with brushing. You will need help brushing your teeth just like you need help tying your shoes or washing your hair.
- 8 When brushing it is important to clean every tooth.

Extension Activities

- 1 Ask pupils, working in groups, to draw up a list of food which is good for keeping teeth healthy.
- 2 Ask pupils to draw in their copies three ways they will look after their teeth.
- 3 Play a game of Dental Bingo in the classroom:
www.dentalhealth.ie/assets/files/pdf/dental_bingo_new_final_090617.pdf

Bring it Home

Encourage your pupils to take home the message of the importance of a healthy balanced diet for good dental health. As a homework activity, you can ask your pupils to:

- 1 Draw the food they have at home which is good for teeth.
- 2 For a week, ask pupils to record how often they brush their teeth every day.
- 3 Explore the Dental Health Foundation website for more fun and factual tooth tips!
www.dentalhealth.ie/resources/educational/

