

# Senior Lesson Plan 3

# Dental Health

## Objective

To develop pupils' understanding of dental hygiene 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 → Health and well-being / Knowing about my body / Food and nutrition

## Words of the Day

**Plaque** – A sticky substance that is made of up of the bacteria that cause tooth decay.

**Enamel** – Enamel covers and protects your teeth. It is the hardest substance in your body.

**Tooth Decay** – When we eat or drink something that contains sugar, acids are produced in the mouth. These acids are produced by bacteria living in the dental plaque on the surface of the teeth. The acids start to break down the enamel surface of the tooth causing decay.

**Gum Disease** – Gum disease is caused by the build-up of dental plaque on the tooth surface and around the gums, generally because of poor tooth brushing. Gum disease often starts in childhood or adolescence.

**Fluoride** – A mineral that is effective in helping to prevent and even reverse the early signs of tooth decay. Fluoride is found in drinking water and in toothpaste.



# Class Discussion

Inform pupils that you will be learning about dental hygiene. Ask pupils what they understand by this term. Explain that it means looking after the mouth, teeth and gums.

As a class, discuss 1) why dental hygiene is important and 2) how to have good dental hygiene. For example:

## 1 Why is dental hygiene important?

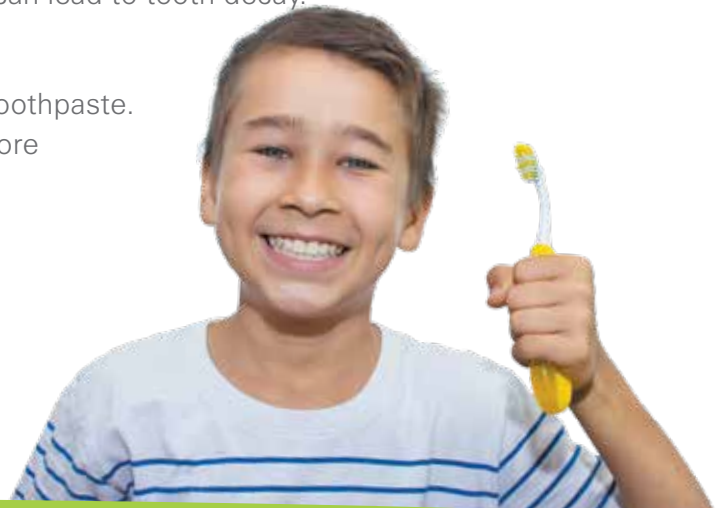
- Poor dental hygiene can cause toothache, tooth decay or sore gums.
- Poor dental hygiene can cause bad breath, which can affect self-esteem.
- Good dental hygiene when you're young means that you form good habits.
- Teeth are important for eating, talking and smiling.

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.

Explain gum disease (see words of the day for definition). Gum disease causes redness, swelling and bleeding when brushing and it can lead to the loss of teeth.

## 2 How to have good dental hygiene:

- Eat healthy meals and snacks.
- The best drinks for healthy teeth are water and milk.
- Include foods that are sources of calcium and phosphorus as these help to keep teeth healthy. Examples include milk, natural yogurt and cheese (low-fat varieties recommended).
- Avoid sugary snacks such as sweets, chocolate, biscuits and sugary drinks, as snacking on foods which have lots of sugar can lead to tooth decay.
- Clean your gums and teeth properly.
- Brush your teeth twice daily with a fluoride toothpaste. This will help by making the tooth enamel more resistant to tooth decay and it is the most effective way of removing plaque.



# Pair Discussion

Read aloud the following questions about dental hygiene and ask pupils to discuss in pairs, then come together as a class and discuss (answers in brackets below).

- 1 How often do you think you should brush your teeth? (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)
- 4 As well as using brushes, what else can we use to clean teeth? (Floss)

Outline procedure for brushing 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.



# Pair Activity

Ask pupils to work in pairs. Give each pair a copy of the 'Top Tooth Tips' activity sheet, asking each partner to take either section A or section B. The pupils must work together matching the sentences from A and B, to complete each of the 8 sentences, writing the correct sentences in their copies.

## Top Tooth Tips - Solution

**A1. B5.** Always brush your teeth twice a day, at bedtime and one other time during the day.

**A2. B6.** Use a soft / medium toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste to brush your teeth.

**A3. B8.** Brushing your teeth properly should take 2-3 minutes (about the length of a song).

**A4. B1.** Spit, don't rinse.

**A5. B7.** Never eat or swallow toothpaste.

**A6. B2.** Change your tooth brush when bristles are worn, about every three months.

**A7. B4.** As well as brushing it is important to floss daily.

**A8. B3.** When brushing it is important to clean every tooth.

## Extension Activities

- 1 Ask pupils to design a poster with a checklist for taking care of their teeth, which they can take home.
- 2 Ask pupils to write a menu which includes tooth-friendly food and drinks.
- 3 Play a game of Dental Bingo in the classroom:  
[www.dentalhealth.ie/assets/files/pdf/dental\\_bingo\\_new\\_final\\_090617.pdf](http://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 List the foods and drinks they have at home which contain tooth-friendly nutrients; and also list those that aren't good for our teeth.
- 2 For a week, record how often they brush their teeth and check how well they did.
- 3 Explore the Dental Health Foundation website for more fun and factual tooth tips! [www.dentalhealth.ie/resources/educational/](http://www.dentalhealth.ie/resources/educational/)

