

Know Your Mouth



An Oral Health
Discussion Guide
for Grades K-3

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THE RESPECTED LEADER IN SCIENTIFIC DENTAL MEETINGSSM

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AN ORAL HEALTH DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR GRADES K-3

Introduction

Your teeth are a very important part of your body. You need your teeth to eat, speak and smile. What favorite healthy foods would be the hardest to eat? Could you eat an apple or a carrot without teeth? Try saying your “S’s” and “F’s” without using your teeth! (Snake, scissors, fast, Friday.) If you stop and think about it, you’d look pretty different if you didn’t have any teeth to smile with.

Teeth are important to us, below are individual lesson plans that help students identify the important parts of your mouth, the different types of teeth and what they are used for. You may choose to lesson plan around one of them.

Anatomy of the mouth

The outside of the mouth

Do you know the important parts of the outside of your mouth? (Lips, chin, cheeks) Your lips protect your teeth, and they help you speak and eat. Without your lips, you could never say all your words. Can you point to your lips? Say fast and fresh without using your lips. Now try with your lips. Point to your chin. Point to your cheeks. What do you think your cheeks are used for? Holding your food in the mouth. Helping to make your smile.

The inside of the mouth

- Your mouth is made up of many parts. The pink skin that is around your teeth is called your gums. What do you think your gums are for? The gums help hold your teeth in your mouth. They also help protect your teeth. When you brush and floss you are helping keep your gums clean and healthy to protect your teeth.
- Under the gums is the bone. What is the job of bone in your body? Bone is used for support. In your mouth and under your gums, bone is there to support your teeth.
- Your tongue is a very important part of your mouth too. Can I see everyone’s tongue? What is a tongue for? It helps you speak clearly. Your tongue also has another important task. For taste! Your taste buds are on your tongue and they tell you when you’re eating something salty, sweet, spicy or bitter. Your tongue can get dirty too. We brush our tongue after our teeth to keep our breath fresh.

The functions of teeth

- Incisors are your front four teeth. What do you use your incisors for? They are used to bite and cut food.
- Canines or Cuspids are the sharpest teeth in your mouth right behind your incisors. What do you use your canines for? They cut and tear food.
- Molars are your biggest teeth way in the back. What do you use your molars for? Molars grind food and make it easier to swallow.

Can you point to your incisors? Your canines? Your molars?

Parts of a tooth

- There are two parts to a tooth. The first part is the top of the tooth called the crown. It's the part that bites, tears and chews your food. The crown is covered by enamel. Enamel is the hard shell of the tooth that protects you from cavities.
- The second part is called the root. Just like a plant has roots, this root connects your teeth to your mouth.

Baby and adult teeth (primary and permanent teeth)

- Baby teeth are important because they help you eat, and they mark a place in your mouth for the adult teeth you will get later. How many teeth do you have? Babies are born without teeth. Do they eat? They only drink! Can you guess when your first tooth grew in? At about six months old.

You have 20 baby teeth. (If you reviewed the functions of teeth lesson plan, you can review. Eight incisors, four center front teeth, four cuspids (two on top and bottom on either side of the incisors, and eight molars (four in each jaw, located at the back of the mouth.) The first teeth you lose are usually in the lower front.

- When you are six years old until you are 12 or 13, you start to lose your baby teeth. What comes in underneath your baby teeth? Adult teeth. You lose them and get adult teeth. There are 32 adult teeth in the mouth: eight incisors, four cuspids, eight bicuspid and 12 molars.

Conclusion

Your mouth is a very important part of your body. Your teeth and your tongue help you eat, speak and smile. Today we learned about the parts that make up your mouth. What are the parts on the outside of your mouth? What's on the inside? We learned the different names of teeth and their jobs. How many teeth do you have? How many will you have when you grow up? Can you name the different teeth and what they do? Now that you know all about your mouth, you can work to keep your teeth and gums healthy and strong.

Special Activities

- Teach the students various tongue twisters. Explain how hard it would be to say those words without certain teeth.
- Instruct students to cut smiles out of magazines. Ask them to make smile collages with the different parts of the mouth they learned.
- Chart with your students healthy foods they like to eat. Which teeth are important to eat those foods? Categorize healthy and unhealthy foods for your teeth.
- Instruct students to write a story about the first time they lost a tooth. Where were they? What did they do with the tooth? How many teeth have they lost? What grew in to the empty space where they lost the tooth?
- Draw a picture of the mouth with all the teeth. Label the front ones incisors, the back teeth molars, etc.