

Let's Visit The Dentist



An Oral Health
Discussion Guide
for Grades K-3

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AN ORAL HEALTH DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR GRADES K-3

Introduction

Questions to ask when visiting a classroom. Ask students to raise their hand to answer:

How many of you like to smile?

What makes a nice smile?

How many of you have teeth?

Have any of you lost a tooth?

Do any of you have new teeth?

For younger children:

Did you know there is a special doctor that takes care of our teeth?

Do you know what that doctor is called?

For older children:

Can you tell me the name of the doctor who takes care of your teeth?

How many of you have ever visited a dentist?

People you will meet in a dental office

The Dentist

- Dentists are very nice doctors who know a lot about our teeth and mouths.
- When you visit the dentist two times a year, the dentist uses small tools to check your teeth to see if they are strong and are growing the right way.
- If teeth are not healthy or if they're not growing in the right way, the dentist can fix them by using special pastes or with other special tools.

The Dental Office Staff – the helpers in the office

- **Dental Hygienist** (repeat this word slowly for young children)

The dental hygienist is the person who knows a lot about keeping your teeth very clean and healthy.

The dental hygienist also cleans your gums. Gums are the pink skin that goes around teeth and holds them in place.

- **Dental Assistant**

The dental assistant is the person who is the dentist's best helper. They are the person that brings you into the room, helps you into the chair and gets you ready to see the dentist.

Dental Equipment

Let's talk about some of the things you might see in a dental office

The Dental Chair

This is a special chair where the patient sits that can move up and down and the top part, where you rest your head can move forward and back. It makes it easier on both the patient and the dentist, because you can lay back and relax. When you lay back the dentist can also look easily into your mouth.

The Light

Without light your mouth can be a very dark place. That's why using a bright light, like a flashlight, that only shines towards the inside your mouth helps the dentist to see your teeth and the rest of your mouth.

The Dental X-ray Machine

This machine is a special camera that takes pictures of your teeth and bones. It shows the dentist what the inside of your teeth look like and the dentist can check for "holes" in your teeth. These holes are called cavities.

Dental Tools and Cleaners

Just like the tools you'd find in a toolbox, the dentist uses special tools, which are a lot smaller and made to specifically fix your teeth. Some of the tools spin around like a wheel and make your teeth very clean and shiny.

Air and Water Spray

Just like when you brush your own teeth the dentist uses cleaning pastes and polishes to clean off the dirt left behind by food and sugar bugs. Once the paste does its job, the dentist uses a water spray with air to give the teeth a blast of water to wash off the extra paste.

The Visit

What happens at your dental visit!

The First Greeting

The first person you will meet will either be the dental hygienist, the person who cleans your teeth, or the dental assistant, the dentist's biggest helper. They will take you into the room where you will have your appointment and get you ready to meet the dentist.

The Appointment

The hygienist will take X-rays, examine your teeth, clean your teeth with special paste and will put on Fluoride, which is like vitamins for the teeth that will make them very strong.

Last you will meet the dentist. The dentist will count your teeth with a special tool called an Explorer and will look at them with a tiny mouth mirror. If there are any "holes," cavities in your teeth, or any other problems in your mouth the dentist will tell you and make a plan to fix them at another visit.

Conclusion

It's very important to keep our teeth healthy and strong. The best way to do this is to visit the dentist at least two times each year. If you have a problem with your mouth or teeth or the dentist finds problems with your mouth or teeth make sure to come back to see the dentist for another visit. They can make everything in your mouth feel and look much better.

Special Activities

Now that you've learned about visiting the dentist, here are some activities we can do together.

- Have the students look up images of children going to the dentist and write down or say the equipment and people they learned about from the lesson.
- Have the students draw a picture of them visiting their dentist.
- Look through magazines and cut out pictures of smiles that you think are very healthy.
- Painting with toothbrushes. From construction paper, cut out a large tooth shape. Using paint, have the children paint the tooth using a toothbrush.