

Smile Power



An Oral Health
Discussion Guide
for Grades 2-4

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SMILE POWER

AN ORAL HEALTH DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR GRADES 2-4

Introduction

A healthy smile is more important than you think. You may not think about it much, but your teeth help you eat and speak. Today we're going to talk about the importance of a healthy smile. We will also learn how to take care of our teeth so you can keep your teeth your whole life.

Why is it important to have healthy teeth?

- You make other people happy and feel happier yourself when you give a big, bright smile.
- Eating is easier and more fun.
- Talking is easier. Your teeth help other people understand you, whether you are giving an answer in class, telling your mom and dad about school or playing with your friends.

Activities:

- Ask children to smile at each other. Ask them if their friends smiled back. Did it make them happy or sad to smile? What do you think a smile can be used for?
- Ask what can you eat without teeth? (Mashed potatoes, smoothies, etc.) What healthy foods would you miss the most?
- Ask the children to say, "teeth are for keeping." Ask them to say it again but this time not letting their tongues touch their teeth. Ask if it is tough to talk that way.

What keeps teeth from being healthy?

- Define bacteria. Bacteria are bugs that live on your teeth that you can't see.
- They live in the white sticky plaque that you can feel on your teeth.
- These bacteria eat sugar.
- When you eat sugary, sweet foods, the bacteria mix with the sugar and make acid.
- The acid attacks your teeth and causes cavities.

What happens if you get a cavity? Cavities do not heal by themselves. Only your dentist can get rid of the decay and place a filling. If you don't go to the dentist, the decay will spread to the rest of the tooth.

Activities:

- Name some foods that sugar bugs might eat.
- Ask students to define what they think a cavity is.
- Discuss what students think they can do to prevent cavities. (Examples: Keep sugar off the teeth by eating healthier foods. Brush the plaque off of their teeth. Floss the sugar bugs from in between their teeth. Visit the dentist to make sure you are getting all the bugs off your teeth before cavities form.)

What can we do to stop the acid attack? How can we fight the enemy, plaque, and keep our teeth healthy?

- Brush your teeth at least twice every day. After every meal is even better.
- Floss. Proper brushing and flossing will break up the bacteria and sugar so they cannot attack your teeth.
- Cut down on sugary snacks.

The more often you eat sweets, the more acid attacks you have.

Eat sweets with meals and then brush and floss afterwards.

Instead of candy, cake or cookies, ask your Mom or Dad for pretzels, cheese, celery or carrot sticks — all safer for your teeth.

Conclusion

Remember our three simple rules: Brush, floss and eat tooth-safe snacks. Lastly, but just as important, visit your dentist. He or she is your partner in good dental health and will help you keep your smile power.

Special Activities

- Bring your toothbrush to school and demonstrate how you brush your teeth.
- Give each child a piece of yarn 18 inches long. Have children get a partner and illustrate flossing by using yarn and the partner's hand. One student holds hands together with fingers straight and held tightly together. The other student flosses between the fingers.
- Instruct students to draw a picture of bacteria and the weapons to fight them (toothbrush, toothpaste, floss).
- Instruct students to draw a picture with safe snacks and a smiling child on one side of the page, and dangerous snacks with a frowning child on the other page.