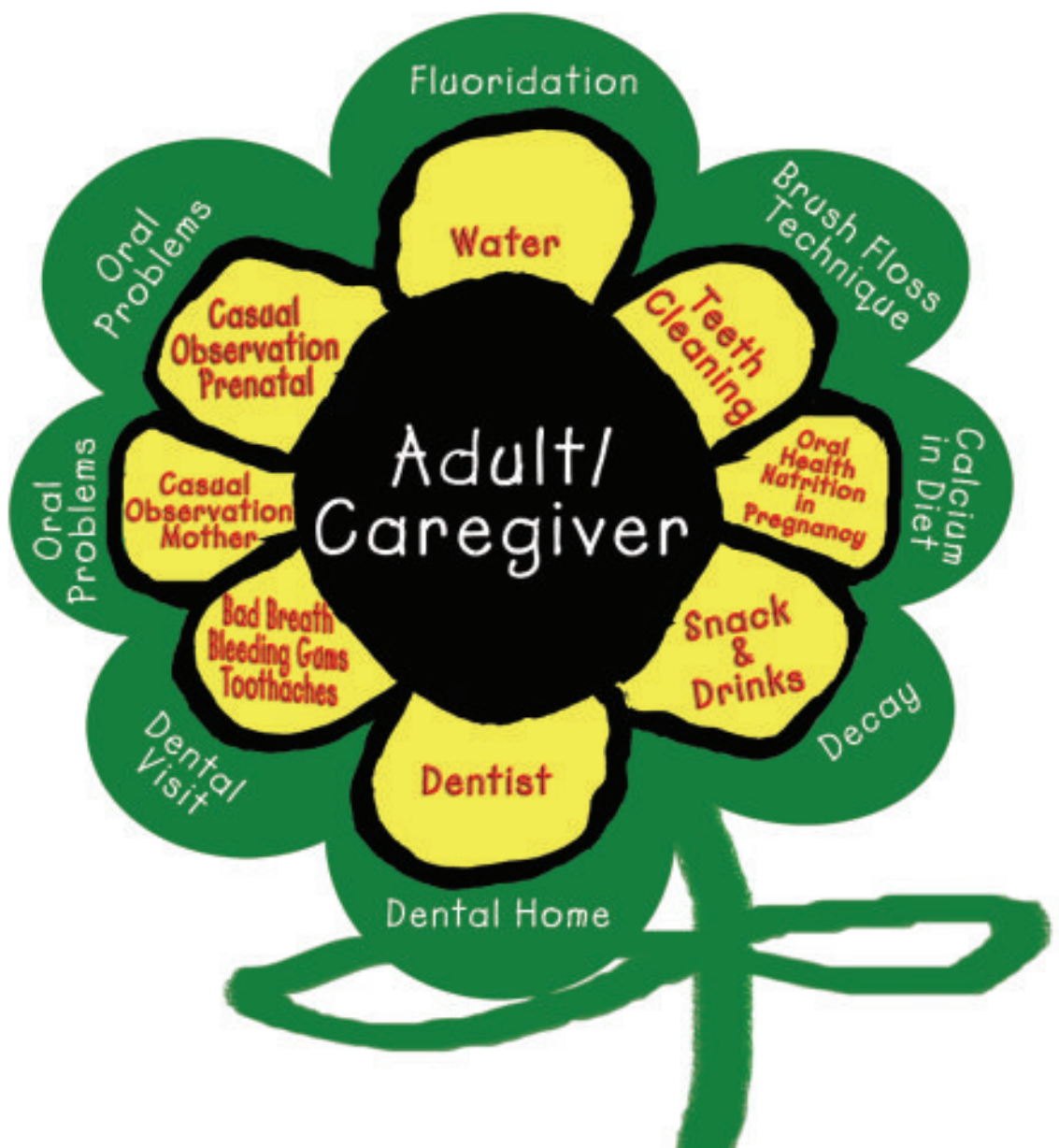


# Adult/Caregiver .....1



## **Unit: Fluoride in Drinking Water/Alternate Source of Fluoride**

### *Understandings:*

- Fluoridated water is safe and helps to prevent tooth decay.
- Use fluoride toothpaste to brush your teeth.
- Fluoride toothpaste and fluoridated water are both good to have on a daily basis.

### *Essential Questions:*

- Does the water that my family drinks contain fluoride?
- Why does fluoride help prevent tooth decay?
- How do I find out the fluoride level in my water?

### *Families Will Know:*

- Fluoride prevents tooth decay. If there is not enough fluoride in the drinking water, the alternatives are fluoride tablets or drops by prescription. These must be prescribed by a doctor or dentist.
- Some private wells have enough fluoride for good dental health, but most wells do not. Families should tell their pediatrician or dentist if they are on well water.
- If the family's water comes from a private well and their physician wants to prescribe fluoride drops, vitamins or tablets for their baby, they must have the water tested first.
- The use of alternative types of fluoride such as tablets or drops is a daily, long-term commitment.

*Families Will Be Able To:*

- Demonstrate knowledge of importance of fluoride by knowing the level of fluoride in their water and/or choosing fluoride treatments or enhanced products.
- Tell their physician or dentist about their water source if they are unsure of the fluoride level.

*Instructional Activities:*

- Discuss the role fluoride plays in the prevention of tooth decay.
- Give handout.
- Discuss the fluoride level of the family's drinking water.
- Discuss alternatives, if there is not enough fluoride in the water.

## Fluoride – How It Makes Teeth Stronger

Fluoride is a naturally occurring substance that is present in almost all sources of drinking water. Fluoride is necessary for the proper development of teeth and bones and it protects teeth once they have erupted into the mouth. Fluoride benefits children before their teeth have come in, and it also protects the teeth of children and adults after all of their teeth are present in the mouth. Fluoride can be ingested or swallowed (by means of fluoridated water or fluoride drops and tablets) and it can be applied topically (fluoride toothpaste, rinses and applications in the dental office). When a tooth is exposed to fluoride it makes it more resistant to cavities.

**Ingested or Swallowed Fluoride:** Drinking fluoridated water from birth significantly reduces tooth decay. Fluoridation is supported by the American Dental Association, American Dental Hygienists' Association, American Medical Association, American Public Health Association and virtually every other major national and international health and science organization.

When fluoridated water is not available, drops or tablets may be prescribed by your physician. Private wells must be tested to determine their natural levels of fluoride. A child should receive only one source of ingested fluoride: fluoridated water, drops or tablets. Exposure to both sources may cause dental fluorosis, which is characterized by white spots on the enamel. Some private wells have enough fluoride for good dental health, but most wells do not. If your water comes from a private well and your physician wants to prescribe fluoride drops, vitamins or tablets for your baby, make sure that he or she has your water tested first.

**Topical Fluoride:** In addition to one source of ingested fluoride, any combination of topical fluorides may be used. Topical fluoride, applied directly to the enamel surface, helps provide additional protection against decay after the teeth have come into the mouth. Fluoride enhances the replacement of minerals lost from enamel surfaces and stops decay before it spreads into the tooth.

There are three common methods for applying topical fluorides:

1. Fluoride toothpastes that have the seal of the American Dental Association's Council on Dental Therapeutics on the carton or tube have been proven effective in reducing decay. Only a small, pea-sized dab of toothpaste is necessary with each brushing to provide a sufficient amount of fluoride. Because toothpaste can contain high amounts of fluoride, it is recommended that children be carefully monitored so that they do not swallow the toothpaste, which may cause fluorosis.
2. A fluoride mouth rinse (not used in preschool age children because they cannot control swallowing reflex).
3. Fluoride application by dentist or dental hygienist.

## **Unit: Cigarettes and Smokeless Tobacco**

### *Understandings:*

- Cigarettes and smokeless tobacco can affect the gums, teeth, breath, blood pressure, heart rate and other parts of the body.
- Tobacco use can lead to oral cancer.

### *Essential Questions:*

- How can tobacco use affect oral health and other parts of the body?
- How can tobacco use lead to oral cancers?

### *Families Will Know:*

- Why they should avoid cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products.

### *Families Will Be Able To:*

- Identify the possible outcomes from cigarette and smokeless tobacco use.
- Identify the signs and symptoms of oral cancer.

### *Instructional Activities:*

- Discuss lesson: “Effects Tobacco Can Have on my Oral Health.”
- Discuss lesson: “Tobacco Products Can Cause Oral Cancer.”
- Discuss signs and symptoms of oral cancers – leave handout.

## **Effects Tobacco Can Have On My Oral Health:** **Cigarettes, cigars and smokeless tobacco products**

Use of any tobacco products can greatly increase your risk of developing gum disease (periodontal disease). Tobacco damages the bone and soft tissues that support your teeth. This causes receding gums, which increases sensitivity to hot and cold and tooth decay in these areas. Without treatment, your teeth may become loose, painful and even fall out.

Use of any tobacco products can delay healing after a tooth extraction or other oral surgery.

It can also contribute to:

- Bad breath
- Stains and yellowing of your teeth
- Build up of tartar on your teeth
- Mouth sores
- Facial wrinkling and appearance of aging
- Delayed healing after oral surgery and tooth extractions
- Leukoplakia – A white patch or plaque that is considered to be precancerous
- Cancer of the pharynx (throat), larynx (voice box) and esophagus (connects mouth to stomach)

Smokeless tobacco products such as snuff and chewing tobacco often contain sugars to enhance their flavors, which increase risk of tooth decay. They also typically contain sand and grit, which can wear down your teeth.

## **Tobacco Products Can Cause Oral Cancer**

The single greatest risk factor for oral cancer is tobacco use in any form. Tobacco causes 90 percent of oral cancers. Only 50 percent of people diagnosed with oral cancer are alive after five years. Seventy percent of oral cancers have spread to lymph nodes in the body by the time the cancer is diagnosed. Oral cancer can include cancer of the lips, tongue, cheeks, gums, the floor and roof of mouth and the throat (esophagus). In addition, tobacco juices can induce cancer of the larynx and stomach.

Surgery for oral cancer is often disfiguring. If the cancer is not caught right away, major surgery is often needed to take out parts of the mouth, tongue or jaw. Head and neck radiation is often part of the treatment and can cause severe complications such as burned tissues, difficulty swallowing and reduced saliva flow.

Tobacco products can cause oral cancer by damaging the lining of the oral cavity and oropharynx, causing tissue to grow more rapidly to repair the damage. Researchers believe that DNA-damaging chemicals in tobacco are linked to the increased risk of oral cancer. Cigars are not a safe alternative to cigarettes. Even if you do not inhale cigar smoke, you are still at risk for oral and throat cancers.

## **Signs and Symptoms of Oral Cancer**

- A persistent sore or irritation that does not heal (after two weeks).
- Color changes such as the development of red or white patches in the mouth or on the lips.
- Pain, tenderness or numbness anywhere in the mouth or lips.
- A lump, thickening, rough spot, crust or small eroded area.
- Difficulty in chewing, swallowing, speaking or persistent hoarseness and moving the jaw or tongue.
- Change in bite – in the way your teeth fit together.
- Repeated bleeding from the mouth or throat.
- Swelling, lump or growth anywhere in or about the mouth or neck.

## Unit: Nutrition During Pregnancy

### *Understandings:*

- Good nutrition with plenty of folic acid, protein, calcium and other vitamins is important to help maintain healthy teeth and contribute to your baby's oral health.

### *Essential Questions:*

- Why does Mom's good nutrition contribute to the baby's oral health?

### *Families Will Know:*

- How eating a balanced diet with plenty of folic acid, protein, calcium and other vitamins will contribute to their oral health and that of their baby.

### *Families Will Be Able To:*

- Demonstrate behaviors consistent with choosing a daily diet based on the four components of the food pyramid.

### *Instructional Activities:*

- Discuss lesson: "The Importance of Good Nutrition During Pregnancy."
- Discuss lesson: "How To Get Enough Calcium."
- Give handouts: "How To Get Enough Calcium."

## **The Importance of Good Nutrition During Pregnancy**

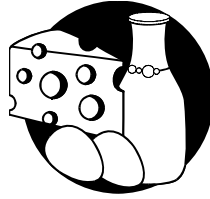
Dental health and nutrition for the expectant mother are important in that tooth development for your baby begins by approximately the sixth to eighth week of pregnancy and continues throughout pregnancy. Hardening of the baby teeth begins at four months.

What you eat affects your baby's developing teeth. Deficiencies in your diet and dental health may cause changes in your baby's tooth formation that will leave a tooth at greater risk for decay later in life. At birth, your baby has all primary teeth and many permanent teeth at different stages of development.

Making wise nutrition and food choices during pregnancy can help avoid an unbalanced diet that may cause inadequate development of the infant's tooth enamel. If the enamel or hard surface that protects the tooth from decay does not develop properly in the fetus while in the mother's womb, that infant will be at higher risk for tooth decay when teeth begin to erupt. During pregnancy, good dental care and an adequate diet are essential for optimal oral development of your baby's teeth. It is important for pregnant women to receive sufficient amounts of folic acid, calcium, protein, phosphorous and vitamins A, C and D.

The old saying that "the mother will lose a tooth for every child" is based on the false assumption that the developing baby draws calcium from the mother's teeth. The baby's calcium needs are provided by the mother's diet. When the mother's diet is not sufficient in calcium, her body may try to compensate for this lack by drawing some calcium from her bones; however, her teeth will NOT be affected. While oral health can be affected during pregnancy, it is often because of poor oral hygiene.

# **HOW TO GET ENOUGH CALCIUM**



## **BREAKFAST:**

- Add low-fat milk instead of water to oatmeal and hot cereals.
- Drink a glass of milk or calcium-fortified orange juice.
- Eat cereals with calcium added.

## **LUNCH:**

- Top bread with cheese, pop it under the broiler for quick toasted-cheese sandwich.
- Serve calcium-fortified orange juice instead of soda pop.
- Make mini pizzas or macaroni and cheese.
- Pack calcium-rich lunches including low-fat yogurt and cheese.
- Add low-fat or fat-free milk instead of water to canned creamed soups such as tomato soup.

## **SNACKS:**

- Serve hot chocolate made from low-fat milk and chocolate syrup.
- Try flavored milk like chocolate or strawberry.
- Cut up raw vegetables for dipping into a low-fat yogurt dip.
- Whip up fruit-and-yogurt smoothies in the blender.
- Pudding made with milk.

## **DINNER:**

- Make a salad with dark leafy green vegetables such as spinach.
- Top salads, soups and stews with low-fat shredded cheese.
- Serve broccoli or cooked, dry beans as a side dish.
- Add tofu made with calcium to stir fry and other dishes.
- Try rice pudding made with low-fat milk for dessert.
- Use flavored yogurts as topping for fruits (canned or fresh).
- Top baked potato with low-fat yogurt or low-fat or fat-free sour cream.

## **Unit: Snacks and Drinks – Adult/Caregiver**

### *Understandings:*

- The importance of healthy snacks to maintain healthy teeth.
- The frequency of snacking as well as the quality of snacks strongly impacts oral health.

### *Essential Questions:*

- What are healthy snacks?
- What kind of snacks to avoid?
- How often are snacks eaten during the day?

### *Families Will Know:*

- How healthy snacks contribute to their oral health.
- How often snacks are eaten and how long they stay in the mouth is just as important as the type of snacks eaten.

### *Families Will Be Able To:*

- Choose healthy snacks to promote good oral health versus snacks that promote tooth decay.
- Discuss how often snack food is eaten and how, if it remains on the teeth for too long, the health of their family's teeth can be at risk.

### *Instructional Activities:*

- Discuss lesson: "Why Does Sugar Hurt Your Teeth?"
- Discuss lesson: "Nutritious Snacks and Foods."
- Give handout: "Healthy and Unhealthy Food for your Teeth."

## **Why Does Sugar Hurt Your Teeth?**

What people choose for meals and snacks can make a big difference in the health of their mouths. Sugars and starches boost acid production on the teeth. When acid stays on teeth, cavities start forming. How quickly cavities form depends on many factors, but among the most important and controllable are:

- The kind of food eaten (sugary and starchy).
- How often the food comes into contact with teeth.
- How long the food stays on teeth.

The longer a sugary or starchy food stays in the mouth, the longer the plaque bacteria produce acids that weaken teeth and the greater the chance for cavities.

Food consistency or texture affects acid production. Starches that stay on teeth – such as cookies, sweetened cereal and sugary foods such as nougat candy bars, caramels and donuts prolong acid production. Sugary foods that are sucked or left to dissolve in the mouth – breathe mints, cough drops and suckers – lengthen the time teeth are coated with sugar. Juicy, fibrous foods such as oranges, apples, carrots and celery generally don't stay on teeth as long.

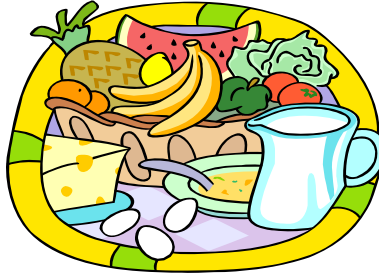
Sticky-sugary or sticky-starchy foods are a problem if eaten many times during the day and by themselves between meals. These foods should be eaten during or at the end of meals. Without other foods and liquids to clean teeth and clear the mouth, tooth-destroying acid remains on teeth for long periods of time.

## **Nutritious Foods and Snacks**

Nutritious foods and snacks are better choices for oral health and put the person at lower risk for tooth decay. Help control plaque, bacteria and acids by choosing ~~how~~ ~~often~~ a food is eaten, what is eaten with it and what actions are taken after eating.

- Meats, poultry and seafood have few carbohydrates; their protein and fat cannot be used by plaque bacteria. Thus, they have little effect on tooth decay.
- Serve sugary or starchy foods during meals when the presence of other foods can help remove the carbohydrates from the mouth. Naptime or bedtime is the worst time to eat because saliva flow slows down during the sleep.
- Eat the sugary/starchy food in one “dose” or sitting, instead of several portions throughout the day.
- Snack at regular intervals between meals, not all day.
- At snack time, serve the sugary/starchy item with raw vegetables (celery, cucumbers and broccoli), water or cheese to reduce acid on teeth. Drinking milk can provide some protection against plaque’s ability to stick to teeth.
- Adults could chew xylitol gum (available over the counter) after eating to encourage saliva flow and remove food debris from teeth. Xylitol gum helps stop plaque from forming on teeth which means there are fewer places for bacteria to produce acid.
- Swish with water to help remove food particles and reduce acid, or brush.

# HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY FOOD FOR YOUR TEETH



## NUTRITIONALLY AND DENTALLY HEALTHY

Milk  
Plain Yogurt  
Cheese  
Cottage Cheese  
Raw Fruits (apple, orange, banana, peach, nectarines, blueberries, strawberries)  
Raw Vegetables (carrots, celery, cucumbers, broccoli, cauliflower, turnips)  
Unsweetened Fruit Juice (Orange, grapefruit)  
Unsweetened Vegetable Juice (tomato, blended vegetable)  
Tossed Salad  
Coleslaw  
Muffins (plain)  
Pizza  
Crackers  
Breads (plain, whole-grain, enriched)  
Cereals (plain, whole-grain, enriched)  
Rolls (plain, whole-grain, enriched)  
Hard Cooked Deviled Eggs  
Nuts (peanuts, pistachios, mixed nuts)  
Seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, sesame)  
Nuts and Bolts (snack mix)  
Sandwiches (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, peanut butter)  
Meat, Poultry, Fish, Eggs  
Peanut Butter

**NUTRITIONALLY UNHEALTHY  
BUT DENTALLY HEALTHY**



French Fries  
Popcorn  
Potato Chips  
Pretzels  
Cheese or Corn-flavored Snacks  
Sugar-free Soft Drinks  
Sugarless Gum

**NUTRITIONALLY AND DENTALLY UNHEALTHY**

Beverages (containing sugar such as regular soft drinks, tea and coffee with added sugar)  
Honey  
Jams and Jellies  
Sweet Baked Goods  
Chocolate Nougat Type Candy Bars  
Fudge  
Candies, Lozenges, Regular Gum, Breath Mints  
Caramel Popcorn  
Licorice  
Sugar Cookies  
Marshmallows  
Raisins  
Fruit Roll Ups  
Taffy  
Fig Bars

## **Unit: Teeth Cleaning – Adult/Caregiver**

### *Understandings:*

- Daily dental care routine is important for healthy teeth.
- There is a correct way to brush and floss.

### *Essential Questions:*

- Why is it important to have a daily care routine for healthy teeth?
- What is the correct way to brush and floss?

### *Families Will Know:*

- The daily dental care routine required for healthy teeth.
- The correct way to brush and floss.

### *Families Will Be Able To:*

- Demonstrate behaviors consistent with a daily dental care routine for healthy teeth.
- Demonstrate the proper way to brush and floss teeth.

### *Instructional Activities:*

- Discuss lesson: “Importance of Brushing and Flossing.”
- Show instructional charts for proper brushing and flossing.

## **The Importance of Brushing and Flossing Teeth**

The mouth contains many germs. Some germs combined with saliva and foods form plaque on the teeth. When you eat sugary and starchy foods, the germs use these foods to make acid. The acid attacks the enamel of the tooth and starts cavities. If this plaque is not removed it hardens into tartar within 24-36 hours, requiring removal by a dental professional (dentist or dental hygienist). Tartar collects germs and makes gums red, puffy and easy to bleed.

### **When and How to Brush**

Brushing removes the plaque from surfaces of the teeth. Ideally, everyone should brush following meals and snacks and always brush before going to bed. Bacteria are more active when a person is sleeping. Realistically, most people brush two times a day: in the morning and at night.

A thorough job of brushing generally takes two to three minutes. All surfaces of the teeth should be brushed. The toothbrush bristles should be angled toward the gum line. Short circular motions should be used.

### **Toothbrushes and Toothpaste**

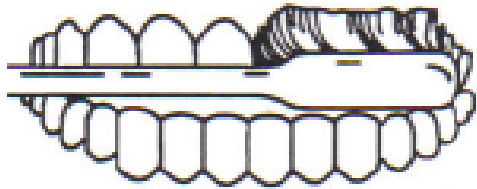
Toothbrushes should be replaced when the bristles are frayed or bent – usually every two to three months. When bristles are frayed or bent, they do not clean the teeth effectively. Bristles should have soft, rounded ends. The size and shape of the toothbrush should allow the user to reach every tooth. Only one pea-sized dab of toothpaste is needed for each brushing.

### **Flossing**

In addition to brushing the teeth, a person should also floss the teeth. Flossing removes plaque from between the teeth. Everyone over age 8 should floss once a day. Children 8 to 11 years may need assistance with flossing until they can easily move the floss in between their teeth.

As with brushing, a regular pattern for flossing should be established to ensure all sides of the teeth are cleaned routinely. Start with 12-15 inches of floss, wind floss around one of the middle fingers. The remaining floss should be wound around the middle finger of the opposite hand to “take up” the used floss. The floss is held tight between the thumb and forefingers with about one inch of floss between them. Gently guide the floss between the teeth. Do not snap the floss into the gums. Curve the floss into a C-shape against the side of the tooth at the gum line. Hold the floss tightly against the tooth. Gently scrape the side of the tooth, moving the floss away from the gum and using an up-and-down motion. Repeat the procedure on the rest of the teeth, including behind the back teeth.

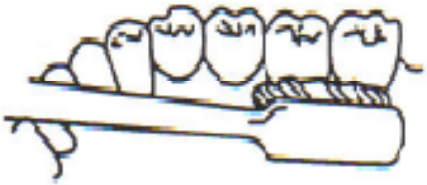
# HOW TO BRUSH



1. Place toothbrush (with pea sized dab of toothpaste) at angle to teeth. Brush each tooth and the gums in small circles.



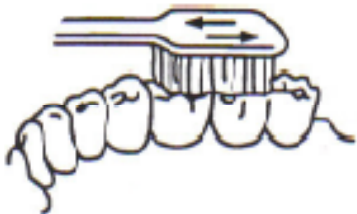
2. Brush the outside of each tooth, upper and lower.



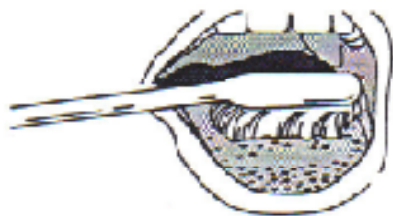
3. Brush the same way on the inside.



4. Tilt the brush and make a few up-and-down strokes to clean the inside of the upper and lower front teeth.



5. Brush the tops of the teeth.

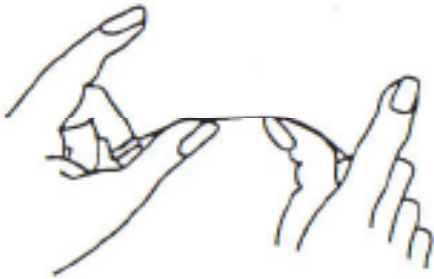


6. Brush the tongue and the roof of the mouth.

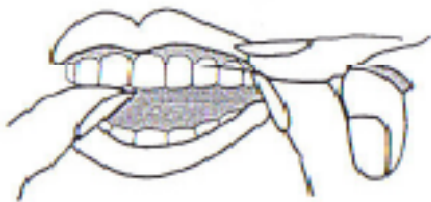
# HOW TO FLOSS



1. Start with 12-15 inches of floss and wind floss around one of the middle fingers. The rest of the floss should be wrapped around the opposite hand to “take up” the dirty floss.



2. The floss is held tight between the thumb and the pointer finger with about an inch of floss between them.



3. Gently guide the floss between the teeth. When it reaches the gum, curve it into a C-shape and beginning at the gumline, scrape the tooth gently up and down. Repeat for both sides of each tooth.

4. Use a back-and-forth motion to guide floss between the teeth.

## **Unit: Your Dental Home**

### *Understandings:*

- A dental home is an important part of good oral health.
- Maintaining a dental home is an ongoing process.

### *Essential Questions:*

- What is a dental home?
- Why is it important to have a dental home?
- What behaviors are required to establish a dental home?
- What behaviors are required to maintain a dental home?

### *Families Will Know:*

- The definition of a dental home.
- Why it is important to have a dental home.
- How to establish a dental home.
- How to maintain a dental home.

### *Families Will Be Able To:*

- Discuss what a dental home is and why it is important to have one.
- Demonstrate the types of behaviors that are required to establish and maintain a dental home.
- Problem solve what to do if they cannot get a dental appointment.

Instructional Activities: “Dental Home” lesson.

# Dental Home

## **What is a Dental Home?**

- Definition of dental home: A dental office or clinic where you and your family feel welcome, have formed a relationship with the dentist and feel comfortable to receive dental care on a regular basis.
- Discuss fear of dental visits and need to feel comfortable.

## **Why is it important to have a Dental Home?**

- Discuss continuity of care, e.g., someone to keep track of your teeth, check-ups for family members every six months, fewer health problems.
- Discuss advantage of continuity of care:
  - a. Advice on oral health issues;
  - b. Keeps teeth healthy and makes you look attractive;
  - c. Provides current information on the condition of gums, teeth, bite;
  - d. Watches for germs, plaque, cavities and gum infections;
  - e. Helps maintain teeth and prevent the need for dentures.

### *Activity:*

- Show pictures of people with unattractive teeth as a result of poor oral health habits.
- Give handout of oral health symptoms which indicate the need for a dental visit.
- Ask question: What does the lack of good dental habits mean for you long term?

## **What behaviors are required to establish a dental home?**

- Discuss chain of events which occur when making a dental appointment:
  - a. What to say on the telephone;
  - b. Arrange for transportation;
  - c. Arrange babysitting.
- Discuss the child visiting the dentist:
  - a. Do not share any anxiety that you may feel about the appointment;
  - b. Avoid statements that suggest an unpleasant situation, e.g., "It won't hurt;"
  - c. Don't bribe the child to go to the dentist;
  - d. Don't threaten subsequent visits as punishment.

### *Activity:*

- Role play making a dental appointment.
- Give booklet "Going to the Dentist" for children.

## **Problems finding a dental home?**

- Discuss what to do if the first dentist called cannot give a dental appointment:

- a. Be prepared to make more than one phone call;
- b. For families on Medicaid/ Healthy Start/ Healthy Families, contact the  
  
County Department of Job and Family Services to find a provider;
- c. Find out if there is a Safety Net dental clinic in the city or county.

*Activity:*

- Role play what to do if you can't get a dental appointment.
- Ask question: Where else can you call to find dental care?

**What behaviors are required for maintaining a dental home?**

- Know the behaviors required for arranging appointments.
- Know how to make a follow-up appointment in the dentist's office or over the telephone.

*Activity:*

- Develop a plan for appointment schedules.
- Choose a prominent place for appointment reminders.

# Visiting the Dental Office

## Dental Home Staff Members

- The ***dentist*** is a primary oral health care provider trained in the science of prevention, diagnosis and treatment of oral disease. Dentists must be licensed by the state.
- The ***dental hygienist*** cleans your teeth and provides oral health education and must be licensed by the state.
- The ***dental assistant*** helps the dentist with dental procedures. A dental assistant works with the dentist at the dental chair.
- The ***dental receptionist*** helps patients schedule appointments, answers the telephone and assists with financial records.

## **Unit: Bad Breath, Bleeding Gums and Toothache**

### *Understandings:*

- Bad breath, bleeding gums and toothache can indicate oral health problems.
- Oral health problems need to be seen by a dentist.

### *Essential Questions:*

- Why do these oral health problems in a mother's or caregiver's mouth indicate the need to be seen by a dentist?
- When should these oral health problems be seen by a dentist?

### *Families Will Know:*

- What can cause bad breath, bleeding gums and toothache?
- Why they should seek dental help.

### *Families Will Be Able To:*

- Recognize the symptoms of oral health problems that need to be seen by a dentist as soon as possible such as toothache, or at next appointment such as bad breath.

### *Instructional Activities:*

- Discuss lesson: "Bad Breath."
- Discuss lesson: "Bleeding Gums."
- Discuss lesson: "Toothache."

## **Bad Breath**

The major source of bad breath is poor oral hygiene and food debris on the back of the tongue.

Certain foods cause bad breath - such as garlic and onions. Bad breath can also be caused by dry mouth or the lack of saliva. Tobacco products cause bad breath. Bad breath may be a sign of a medical disorder.

If you don't brush and floss daily, food collects between the teeth, on the tongue and around the gums causing bad breath. Brushing your tongue when you brush your teeth may help. Also, it is important to drink lots of water to wash away food from the teeth, tongue and gums.

Persistent bad breath and taste in the mouth is also a warning sign for gum disease. If bad breath does not go away after brushing and flossing, this could be the gum disease called gingivitis or periodontal disease. See a dentist if this occurs.

## **Bleeding Gums and Gingivitis**

Healthy gums should not bleed. Gums that bleed can be a sign of gingivitis. Gingivitis is infection and swelling of the gums. It is one of the most common gum problems. Early gingivitis can be painless and may not be noticed. Symptoms can include red, soft or swollen gums, bad breath and a bad taste in the mouth. Pregnant women and untreated diabetics are more likely to get gingivitis.

Bleeding gums can also be a sign of periodontal disease. Periodontal disease can cause infected gums to pull away from the teeth because of damaged bone around the teeth. Eventually your teeth may become loose and fall out. Brushing and flossing are the best ways to prevent bleeding gums, gingivitis and periodontal disease.

### **Other causes of bleeding gums**

Bleeding can also be due to injury of the gums by any sharp item such as a toothpick, fish bone or pin.

## **Toothache**

### **What does it feel like?**

**Feeling a sharp pain when biting down.** This could be a cavity, a cracked tooth or a loose filling. See your dentist immediately.

**Having severe pain, pressure and swelling in the mouth that does not go away.** It is possible that this is an abscess, which is an infection in the tooth and/or gum. See your dentist immediately.

**Upper teeth and jaw ache, but the pain is not sharp.** This may be a sinus infection. Sinus pain can “travel” to the upper jaw. Also, grinding of the teeth can cause a dull ache in the upper jaw. See your medical doctor.

**After receiving dental treatment, teeth are sensitive to heat or cold.** Temporary tooth pain is normal after dental treatment. The pain should go away within four to six weeks. If it doesn't, or if it gets worse, be sure to see your dentist soon.

**Experiencing a sudden slight pain in the teeth when eating or drinking something hot or cold, which then goes away.** This usually means a loose filling or gums pulling away from the teeth. A toothpaste to relieve sensitivity can be used, but if pain persists, see your dentist.

**If you have a toothache, you need to see a dentist as soon as possible.**

## **Unit: Casual Observation – Adult/Caregiver**

### *Understandings:*

- Changes in an adult’s mouth can indicate oral health problems.

### *Essential Questions:*

- What changes should adults watch for in their mouths?

### *Adults Will Know:*

- Why decay, discolored teeth, plaque on teeth and missing teeth can indicate oral health problems.

### *Adults Will Be Able To:*

- Successfully recognize their oral health problems.

### *Instructional Activities:*

- Discuss lesson: “Decay/Cavities.”
- Discuss lesson: “Discolored Teeth - Adult.”
- Discuss lesson: “Adult Teeth with Plaque.”
- Discuss lesson: “Missing Teeth.”

## **Decay/Cavities**

- Bacteria (germs) are connected to dental decay. These bacteria do not appear in the mouth of infants until after the teeth come in. Most likely, infants become infected from their parents, siblings or other individuals with close contact. Usually the mother is considered to be the source. Mothers who have a lot of cavities are more likely to have these bacteria and infect their children.
- Cavities develop in the grooves of the back teeth which are hard to reach when brushing, but where food usually sticks. Cavities also appear on smooth surfaces that can easily be brushed.
- One of the most important factors related to cavities is sugar. Actually, the development of cavities depends on how often sugary foods are eaten and not on the amount eaten. Changing the diet to decrease how often sugar is eaten is very important.
- In children who still drink from the bottle, one of the most important causes of decay is putting them to bed with a bottle. The sugar from the juice or milk remains on the babies' teeth overnight. Try to give them water at naptime or bedtime, or get them to sleep without a bottle at all.
- Fluoride is the most effective measure against dental decay.
- Taking care of your teeth is essential. Parents should brush children's teeth.
- Get your child used to visiting the dentist at an early age (12 months of age or 6 months after first tooth comes into the mouth).

## **Discolored Teeth - Adult**

Natural tooth colors are on a scale from gray to white to yellow. Some people are simply born with yellowish or grayish teeth.

Some teeth are discolored on the surface of the teeth. Some teeth are discolored from the inside of the tooth. Discoloration may be all over the tooth or appear as spots or lines in the enamel.

### **Causes of discolored teeth:**

- Trauma – tooth becomes discolored gray from being hit;
- High fever when the tooth is forming;
- Excessive fluoride;
- Taking tetracycline before 8 years of age;
- Not cleaning your teeth daily;
- Decay – tooth looks dark because of decay;
- Eating and drinking foods or beverages that can stain the teeth;
- Old silver fillings make the tooth appear black or gray;
- Tobacco products stain teeth.

## **Adult Teeth with Plaque**

Plaque is the soft, yellow-white material found on teeth and gums. While it is soft a person can clean it off with a toothbrush and floss. When plaque gets hard it is called tartar or calculus. Tartar can only be removed by the dentist or dental hygienist at the dental office.

### **Plaque causes tooth decay**

Bacteria in plaque digest food left on your teeth and gums. The waste product is an acid. This acid dissolves the tooth structure and causes a cavity. Brushing and flossing removes the plaque. It is important to remove the plaque daily.

### **Plaque causes gingivitis**

Healthy gums are pale pink and firm. When the gums become inflamed and swollen gingivitis is present. Typically, this results from the bacteria in plaque and poor oral hygiene.

Gingivitis is the inflammation of the gums around the teeth due to improper cleaning of teeth. It is nearly always reversible. The usual signs of gingivitis are gums which are swollen and bleed on brushing.

Thorough daily brushing, regular flossing and seeing your dentist every six months can reduce the chances of developing serious gingivitis and periodontal disease.

## **Missing Teeth**

The No. 1 cause of missing multiple teeth in adults is periodontal disease which is a gum and bone disease. In a number of people, periodontal disease occurs when the gums become inflamed and infected. This infection spreads from the gums to the bone that supports the teeth in the mouth. The teeth become loose and eventually fall out.

Signs of periodontal disease:

- Swollen gums;
- Gums that appear bright red or red-purple;
- Gums that appear shiny;
- Gums that bleed easily – blood on toothbrush even with gentle brushing;
- Gums that are tender when touched, but painless otherwise;
- Bad breath;
- Loose teeth.

### **Why is it important to keep your teeth?**

When a permanent tooth is lost, the teeth beside it begin to shift. It becomes harder to chew your food.

Loss of teeth often causes a feeling of aging. Without the teeth and bone to support your cheeks and lips, your face caves in and makes you look older.

## **Unit: Casual Observation – Prenatal**

### *Understandings:*

- Changes in a pregnant mother’s mouth can indicate oral health problems.

### *Essential Questions:*

- What changes should pregnant mothers watch for in their mouth?

### *Prenatal Women Will Know:*

- What causes changes in mouth and gums?
- How to care for mouth and gums during pregnancy.

### *Prenatal Women Will Be Able To:*

- Successfully recognize their oral health status.

### *Instructional Activities:*

- Discuss lesson: “Changes in Mouth and Gums Due to Pregnancy.”

## **Changes in Mouth and Gums Due to Pregnancy**

### **How does pregnancy affect my teeth and gums?**

Pregnancy can increase your risk of gum disease. Hormonal changes cause the gums to react differently to the germs in plaque, resulting in swollen, tender gums that may bleed when you floss or brush. This is called “pregnancy gingivitis” and affects about half of all pregnant women. The warning signs of gum disease are:

- Tender, swollen or red gums;
- Gums that bleed when you brush and floss your teeth;
- Bad breath or a bad taste in your mouth that won’t go away.

If you already have signs of gum disease, your pregnancy could make it worse. You may also develop a swelling on the outside of the gums that bleeds when you brush. This kind of lump is called a “pregnancy tumor.” These are relatively rare and are more likely to appear in an area where you have gingivitis. It’s generally painless and harmless and usually disappears after delivery. However, if it begins to cause you discomfort, interferes with chewing or brushing or starts to bleed excessively, you can have it removed.

### **How can I care for my teeth and gums during pregnancy?**

- Brush at least twice a day (after every meal if possible) using a soft-bristled brush and toothpaste with fluoride.
- Floss daily.
- Get regular dental care. If you haven’t seen your dentist recently, schedule a visit now for a thorough cleaning and checkup. Be sure to let the staff at your dental office know you’re pregnant and how far along you are. They will likely want to see you once more during your pregnancy, or even more frequently if you already have gum disease, since pregnancy is likely to make it worse.

### **Morning sickness**

If you vomit frequently during pregnancy it is important to rinse your mouth out with water or a mouth rinse. Do not brush your teeth immediately after vomiting. Stomach acids soften the teeth.

### **When should I call the dentist?**

Call the dentist immediately if you have a toothache or if your gums are bleeding frequently and causing you pain. Call if you have other signs of gum disease like swollen, tender gums, receding gums, persistent bad breath or loosening teeth. If you notice a growth in your mouth (even if you think it’s just a “pregnancy tumor”), have it checked out by your dentist. Don’t put off dental work because tooth decay and gum disease can lead to a harmful infection. There’s no problem with getting local anesthesia for dental work at any time during your pregnancy.