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## Focus on Preventing Tooth Decay

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Resources to Make You Smile! This monthly newsletter features materials for Head Start staff to use in promoting oral health for pregnant women and children enrolled in Head Start programs, including children with disabilities. It also includes a recipe for a healthy snack that children can make in a Head Start classroom or at home with their families. Each month, the newsletter will feature resources and a recipe intended to support Head Start staff as they engage with families about oral health.

### Preventing Tooth Decay



Tooth decay is caused by bacteria in the mouth that use the sugar in food to make acid. Acid removes minerals from the outer tooth surface (enamel). Over time, acid breaks down the surface and creates a cavity (hole) in the tooth.

Explore [Preventing Tooth Decay](#) to learn more about what can cause and prevent tooth decay. Share its messages with parents so they can help decrease factors

that cause tooth decay in children and increase factors that protect children's teeth. This resource is part of the [Brush Up on Oral Health Tip Sheet](#) series.

## Resources for Parents

Share these [Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles](#) handouts with parents to reinforce positive oral health messages:

- [Brushing Your Child's Teeth](#) offers tips for parents on brushing their child's teeth, including using the right amount of toothpaste based on their child's age.
- [Toothbrushing Positions for Your Child with a Disability](#) describes ways to position a young child to make it easier for parents to reach all areas of their child's mouth with the toothbrush.
- [Toothbrushing Tips for Your Child with a Disability](#) offers tips for parents on how to brush the teeth of their child who may lack the fine motor skills to brush themselves.

## Cook's Corner Recipe: Leprechaun Hats

### Ingredients

1 cucumber

¼ yellow bell pepper

4 ounces low-fat cheese, such as mozzarella, provolone, cheddar, or Monterey Jack



### Directions

1. Cut ½ of the cucumber crosswise into three 1-inch sections.
2. Stand the cucumber sections up and cut each section in half to make the top of the hat.
3. Cut the other ½ cucumber into thin strips that are a little longer than the cucumber sections to make the brim of the hat.
4. Cut the pepper into six small squares.
5. Cut the cheese into six thin strips.
6. Take one cucumber section, one strip of cheese, one cucumber strip, and one pepper square to form a hat.

### **Makes 6 servings**

**Safety tip:** To prevent injuries, an adult should slice ingredients.

### **Stay Informed**

Please share this issue of Resources to Make You Smile! with colleagues who may be interested.

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