



National Center on
Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety



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Using Fluoride to Prevent, Repair, or Stop Tooth Decay

Welcome to Resources to Make You Smile! This monthly newsletter features information and tools Head Start staff can use to help families promote good oral health. These tips help Head Start staff support families, expectant families, and children. The newsletter also includes a recipe for a healthy snack that children can make in a Head Start classroom or at home with their families.

Fluoride



Fluoride is the safest and best way to prevent tooth decay. It can also repair early tooth decay! And when combined with a tiny amount of silver, fluoride can stop tooth decay from getting worse.

Fluoride comes in many forms. Families apply fluoride to their teeth when they use fluoride toothpaste and mouth rinse. Oral health professionals can apply it to teeth during dental visits.

Many communities add fluoride to their tap water since most water does not have enough natural fluoride to prevent tooth decay. In most communities in the United States, tap water is safe to drink. But some parents, especially those from other countries, don't know that. These parents may give their child bottled water instead, which usually does not contain fluoride.

Resources for Staff

Review these [Brush Up on Oral Health](#) tip sheets to learn about fluoride and how it can prevent, repair, and stop tooth decay from getting worse. Learn tips to help parents understand the benefits of fluoride for keeping their and their children's mouths healthy.

- [Understanding How Fluoride Helps to Prevent and Repair Tooth Decay](#)
- [Understanding Use of Silver Diamine Fluoride](#)
- [Understanding Why Community Water Fluoridation Is Important](#)

Read the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Bottled Water](#) fact sheet for answers to common questions about bottled water and fluoride.

Resources for Parents

Share the [Healthy Habits for Happy Smiles](#) handouts with parents to help them learn about fluoride and ways they can incorporate it into their child's daily routine.

- [Brushing Your Child's Teeth](#)
- [Encouraging Your Child to Drink Water](#)
- [Getting Fluoride for Your Child](#)

Print and feature the [I Like My Teeth](#) posters in areas where parents can read about fluoride such as parent bulletin boards, pick-up and drop-off areas, and the classroom:

- [Drinking Water with Fluoride Keeps Teeth Healthy and Strong](#)
- [Fluoride: Cavity Fighter](#)
- [Strengthen Your Body: One Glass at a Time](#)
- [You're Teaching Them To...](#)

Cook's Corner Recipe: Bell Pepper Houses

Ingredients

- 1 yellow bell pepper
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 cucumber
- 1 small bunch of parsley*



* Did you know that parsley is a natural breath freshener?

Directions

1. Cut the yellow bell pepper into 1½-inch by 2-inch rectangles.
2. Cut the red bell pepper into triangles and small squares.
3. Cut the cucumber lengthwise into thin slices.
4. Place a cucumber slice on a plate to form a lawn.
5. Place two yellow bell pepper rectangles above the cucumber slice to form the bottom part of two houses.
6. Place one red bell pepper triangle above each rectangle to form the roofs.
7. Place one small bell pepper square on each house to form the windows.
8. Place three sprigs of parsley on each side of the houses to form trees or bushes.

Makes 3–4 servings

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

Stay Connected!

Join [MyPeers](#) to connect with Head Start and early childhood colleagues around the country on this and other topics. Members of the **Health, Safety, and Wellness** community are currently networking, sharing, and learning from each other. Find it under "All Communities" and select the blue "Join" button.

Please share this issue with others who may be interested.

Did someone forward you this newsletter? [Subscribe](#) to stay up to date!

We Want to Hear from You!

Send your questions or comments to the National Center on Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety at health@ecetta.info or (toll-free) 888-227-5125.

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