



## Lesson 2

# Teeth Can Get Sick

## Main Lesson Plan

### Learning Objectives

After this lesson children will be able to

- Describe a cavity as a hole in a tooth.
- Tell how a tooth gets a cavity.
- Explain what happens to a cavity if it is not fixed.
- Tell who can fix a cavity.

### Background Information for Teachers

Tooth decay is the most common childhood illness in the United States today. It is five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever. When germs that stick to teeth eat sugar in foods or drinks, an acid is made. The acid destroys the tooth surface and makes a hole (cavity). Cavities do not heal like cuts or scrapes. Once the tooth has decay, the hole will get bigger and bigger until the whole tooth decays. The only way to stop the hole from becoming larger and larger is to have a dentist fix it.

**Source:** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2000. *Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/DataStatistics/SurgeonGeneral>.

### Head Start Domains and Elements

Head Start Domains	Head Start Domain Elements
Creative Arts Expression	Music
Language Development	Expressive Language Receptive Language
Literacy Knowledge and Skills	Alphabet Knowledge Book Appreciation Print Concepts and Conventions
Logic and Reasoning	Reasoning and Problem Solving Symbolic Representation
Physical Development and Health	Health Knowledge and Practice
Social Studies Knowledge and Skills	Family and Community

**Special instructions:** The main lesson plan is to be held during circle time.

**Description:** Children will be introduced to the concept of tooth decay. Picture cards of germs and sugar will be shown to illustrate the cause of tooth decay.

**Materials (included in curriculum):** Picture cards of a tooth with a cavity (C—Cavity), a dentist (D—Dentist), germs (G—Germs), a microscope (M—Microscope), and a teaspoon of sugar (S—Sugar); and *Teeth Talk: A Newsletter for Parents of Children Enrolled in Maryland's Head Start Programs* (Lesson 2: Teeth Can Get Sick)

## Instructions

**TELL** the children: Remember when we talked about our mouths? We talked about our teeth, which are in our mouths, and we talked about the important jobs that teeth do. Who can tell me what those important jobs are?

**LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: That's right. The mouth helps us smile, talk, and eat/chew.

**TELL** the children: Did you know that teeth can get sick? They get sick by getting cavities.

**ASK** the children: Does anyone know what a cavity is?

**LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: Yes. A cavity is a hole in a tooth.

**SHOW** the children the picture card of a tooth with a cavity. **ASK** the children: How can a tooth get a cavity?

**LISTEN** to their answers.

**TELL** the children: To get a cavity, you need three things. The first thing you need is a tooth. Anyone who has a tooth in your mouth, please raise your hand. Hmmm. It looks like everyone in the room has a tooth. Guess that means that we can all get a cavity.

The second thing you need to get a cavity is germs.

**ASK** the children: Who knows what germs are? **LISTEN** to their answers. **ASK** the children: What do germs look like? **LISTEN** to their answers.

**TELL** the children: Germs are invisible.

**ASK** the children. What does invisible mean?

**LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: That's right. Invisible means that you can't see it. You can't see germs unless you look at them through a special instrument called a microscope. Microscopes can let you see very teeny, tiny things.

**SHOW** the children the picture card of the microscope, then **SHOW** the children the picture card of what the germs look like under the microscope.



**TELL** the children: Guess what—everyone has germs in their mouths! And those germs like to stick to your teeth.

Some germs are bad for us and can make us sick. That’s when we get a cold or the flu. Some of the germs in your mouth are bad for your teeth and can make your teeth sick.

**TELL** the children: When a tooth gets sick, it gets a cavity. And the third thing you need to make a cavity in your tooth is sugar! Germs love sugar! Sugar makes germs very strong! When germs are strong they can make a hole in your tooth. **SHOW** the children the picture card of a teaspoon of sugar.

**ASK** the children: How do the germs in your mouth get sugar? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: Yes. The germs get sugar when we put food or a drink with sugar in our mouths.

**ASK** the children: Can you tell me what foods have a lot of sugar?

**LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: That’s right. Foods like cookies, candy, cake, and ice cream have a lot of sugar.

**ASK** the children: What about drinks? What drinks have a lot of sugar? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: Correct. Drinks like soda pop, lemonade, and fruit drinks have a lot of sugar.

**TELL** the children: Let’s pretend that we have a cavity in our tooth.

**ASK** the children: Can our tooth get better on its own? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: That’s right. It can’t. It needs to be fixed.

**ASK** the children: Who do you think can help us fix a cavity in our tooth? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: Yes. A dentist can help us fix a cavity.

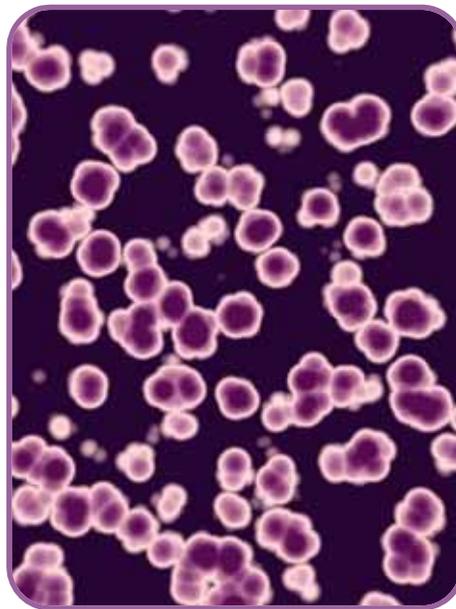
**SHOW** the children the picture card of a dentist.

**ASK** the children: Now let’s pretend that we have a tooth with a cavity and we don’t get the cavity fixed by a dentist. What do you think will happen to the cavity if we leave it alone?

**LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: That’s right. The cavity will keep getting bigger and bigger and it can hurt.

**ASK** the children: If you have a cavity, how will your smile look? How will you be able to chew your food? How well will you be able to talk? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: Correct. Your smile won’t look as nice as before, and it might hurt to chew. It could be hard to talk, too.

**TELL** the children: Let’s sing a song about how we can get tooth decay. The name of the song is “Tooth Decay” (sung to the tune of “The Wheels on the Bus”).



## Tooth Decay

I'm a germ and I like your teeth  
Like your teeth  
Like your teeth  
I'm a germ and I like your teeth  
I'll stick around all day.

My favorite food is sugar, sugar, sugar  
Sugar, sugar, sugar  
Sugar, sugar, sugar  
My favorite food is sugar, sugar, sugar  
It helps me make decay.

Sugar makes me strong, strong, strong  
Strong, strong, strong  
Strong, strong, strong  
Sugar makes me strong, strong, strong  
So I can make decay.

Watch how many treats you eat  
Treats you eat  
Treats you eat  
Watch how many treats you eat  
To keep decay away.

**Source:** Adapted from "The Wheels on the Bus."

**GIVE** *Teeth Talk: A Newsletter for Parents of Children Enrolled in Maryland's Head Start Programs* (Lesson 2: Teeth Can Get Sick) to each child's parent and encourage the parent to reinforce the lesson plan concepts with suggested activities the family can do at home.

## Check for Knowledge and Understanding

- Ask the children to explain what a cavity is.
- Ask the children to describe how a cavity gets in a tooth.
- Ask the children to explain what happens if a tooth has a cavity and we do not get it fixed.
- Ask the children to say who can fix a cavity.





## Small Group Supplemental/ Enrichment Activities

Head Start Domains	Head Start Domain Elements
Approaches to Learning	Initiative and Curiosity Persistence and Attentiveness
Language Development	Expressive Language Receptive Language
Literacy Knowledge and Skills	Book Appreciation Print Concepts and Conventions
Logic and Reasoning	Reasoning and Problem Solving
Physical Development and Health	Fine Motor Skills Health Knowledge and Practice
Social and Emotional Development	Self-concept and Self-efficacy
Social Studies Knowledge and Skills	Family and Community

### *How Is a Cavity Made?*

**Domain:** Literacy Knowledge and Skills

**Materials (included in curriculum):** *How Is a Cavity Made?* (book)

**Instructions:** Read *How Is a Cavity Made?* to the children.

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### *My Cavity Book*

**Domain:** Approaches to Learning, Language Development, Logic and Reasoning

**Materials (not included in curriculum):** One piece of paper for each child, crayons or markers

**Instructions:**

1. Tell the children they are going to make a picture book about cavities.
  2. Tell each child to fold the paper in half to make a book.
  3. Ask each child to draw a picture of a face on the cover of the book.
  4. Start the story by saying "when I brushed my teeth I saw a little hole."
  5. Ask the children to finish the story by drawing how that little hole got in the tooth in the pages of the book.
  6. Have each child show his or her story to the other children.
  7. Hang the books around the room for all to see.
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## *Cavities Change How I Look*

**Domains:** Language Development, Social and Emotional Development

**Materials (included in curriculum):** Eight picture cards with two pictures of the same child smiling

**Materials (not included in curriculum):** Brown or black erasable markers

**Instructions:**

1. Give one picture card to each child.
2. Ask the children to color a cavity on one of the teeth on the picture marked "Cavities."
3. Tell each child to hold up their picture card for all the children to see.
4. Ask the children to describe the difference between their picture with "No Cavities" and their picture with "Cavities."
5. Ask the children to describe how the child in their picture might feel with a cavity in one of his or her teeth.

*Note:* This same activity could be done using a digital camera. Take a picture of each child and print two copies of the picture. Instruct the child to color in one of his or her teeth and compare it to the "before" picture.

**Source:** Adapted with permission from South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina Healthy Schools. 2005. *Oral Health Supplemental Curriculum Resource*. Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina Healthy Schools. <http://www.mchoralhealth.org/Materials/Multiples/SC.html>

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No Cavities



Cavities

## *Filling Decayed Teeth*

**Domain:** Logic and Reasoning, Physical Development and Health, Social Studies Knowledge and Skills

**Materials (not included in curriculum):** Construction paper, scissors, modeling clay, glue or paste

**Instructions:**

1. Give each child a piece of construction paper, and ask the children to draw a face on the paper.
  2. Using modeling clay, have each child pinch off 10 small pieces of clay and form them into individual balls.
  3. Tell the children to pretend that each piece of modeling clay is a tooth, and have them paste or glue the pieces onto their face's mouth.
  4. Poke a hole into one or two of each child's modeling clay teeth with a safety scissor or blunt, and explain to them that the hole is a cavity.
  5. Ask the children to pretend that they are dentists and their job is to fix the cavity.
  6. Tell the children to use a different-colored piece of modeling clay to fill the hole.
  7. Explain to the children that this is what the dentist does to fix cavities.
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## Lesson Plan Sources

South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina Healthy Schools. 2005. *Oral Health Supplemental Curriculum Resource*. Columbia, SC: South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina Healthy Schools. <http://www.mchoralhealth.org/Materials/Multiples/SC.html>.

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"The Wheels on the Bus."