



## Lesson 3

# I Can Do a Lot to Keep My Teeth Healthy: Brush My Teeth

## Main Lesson Plan

### Learning Objectives

After this lesson children will be able to

- Say why toothbrushing is important.
- Identify how much toothpaste should be put on the toothbrush.
- Demonstrate the right way to brush their teeth.
- Describe the best times to brush their teeth each day.

### Background Information for Teachers

The most important way to prevent tooth decay is by taking good care of your teeth. Brushing teeth at least twice a day with a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste and eating healthy foods that are low in sugar are the best ways to prevent tooth decay. The best times to brush your teeth are in the morning and before going to bed at night. It is okay for children to brush more than two times a day. Young children do not have the fine motor skills to brush their teeth well on their own. An adult (for example, a parent, a grandparent, a baby-sitter, or a teacher) should help young children brush their teeth. Toothbrushes should never be shared with anyone.

Modeling good toothbrushing techniques is also an important way to teach children the importance of brushing. Having all the children brush their teeth together in class is a good approach for modeling appropriate behavior. It also prevents cross-contamination of toothbrushes because the children are separated from each other.

Children should use child-size toothbrushes with soft bristles. If the bristles do not stand straight up, the toothbrush should be replaced.

**Source:** American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Council on Clinical Affairs. 2010–2011. Early childhood caries (ECC): Classification, consequences, and preventive strategies. *Pediatric Dentistry* 32(6 Suppl.):41–44. [http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies\\_Guidelines/P\\_ECCClassifications.pdf](http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/P_ECCClassifications.pdf).

## Head Start Domains and Elements

Head Start Domains	Head Start Domain Elements
Approaches to Learning	Cooperation 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

**Special instructions:** The main lesson plan is to be held at a worktable with children sitting in chairs.

**Description:** Children will learn about the type of toothbrush to use for brushing teeth, how to recognize an old toothbrush, the best times for brushing their teeth, and whether it is okay to share a toothbrush. Children will receive instructions on how to brush their teeth and a demonstration of proper toothbrushing technique, and, after that, the class will brush their teeth together.

**Materials (included in curriculum):** Picture cards of an adult- and child-size toothbrush (T—Toothbrush), an old toothbrush (O—Old toothbrush) and a new toothbrush (N—New toothbrush), a placemat for each child with picture instructions for how to brush at the table, and toothpaste with fluoride (T—Toothpaste); *Brush Your Teeth Please: A Pop-Up Book*; *Teeth Talk: A Newsletter for Parents of Children Enrolled in Maryland's Head Start Programs* (Lesson 3: Brush to Keep Teeth Healthy)

**Materials (not included in curriculum):** Tube of fluoridated toothpaste, child-size toothbrush with soft bristles for each child that is labeled with the child's name, paper cup for each child, napkin for each child

## Instructions

**ASK** the children: Remember when we talked about the three things that are needed to get a cavity in a tooth? What are those three things again? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: Yes. The three things are a tooth, germs, and sugar.

**TELL** the children: There's one thing we can do every day to stop teeth from getting cavities.

**ASK** the children: Who can tell me what that one thing might be? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: That's right. We can brush the germs off our teeth.

**READ** *Brush Your Teeth Please: A Pop-Up Book* to the children.

**ASK** the children: What tool did the animals use to brush the germs off their teeth?

**LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: Yes. A toothbrush! Like the bear, chimp, hippo, and lion, we can all use a toothbrush to brush the germs off our teeth.

**SHOW** the children a picture card of an adult-size and a child-size toothbrush.

**ASK** the children: Which of these toothbrushes would be the best size for you? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: Yes. The smaller one.

**ASK** the children: Why do you think a smaller toothbrush would work better inside your mouth? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: That's right. Your mouth is smaller than a grown-up's. A grown-up size toothbrush wouldn't do a very good job of cleaning your teeth because it's too big.

**ASK** the children: What about the bristles? Who can show me where the bristles are on the toothbrush in this picture card?

**SHOW** the children the picture card of the child-size toothbrush. **WATCH** what the children point to in the picture of the toothbrush.

**TELL** the children: The bristles on your toothbrush are very important because they brush the germs off your teeth. It's important that your toothbrush bristles are straight because they clean your teeth better than toothbrush bristles that are bent over.



**SHOW** the children the picture card of a new toothbrush and the picture card of the old toothbrush.

**ASK** the children: Which toothbrush would do a better job of cleaning your teeth? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: That's right. The new toothbrush.

**ASK** the children: Do you think it's a good idea to share the same toothbrush with another person? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: No. It's not a good idea to share toothbrushes. Toothbrushes can spread germs, and if the person who used your toothbrush was sick, you could get their germs from the toothbrush and get sick too.

**ASK** the children: How should teeth be brushed? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers.

**GIVE** each child a placemat and **TELL** the children: I am giving each of you a toothbrushing placemat. The toothbrushing placemat has pictures that show the best way to brush your teeth while you are in school. We are going to brush our together at the table every day. Before it's your turn to brush, I am going to show you all the steps for brushing your teeth. Follow me by putting your finger on the picture in the placemat that shows what I am doing.

**TELL** the children: The first thing you do to your toothbrush is to put some toothpaste on the edge of a paper cup. You only need a little bit of toothpaste.



**SHOW** the children the tube of toothpaste, and squeeze out a pea-size amount onto the rim of a cup. **SHOW** them the cup with the toothpaste on it.

**TELL** the children: This is all you need. The next thing you do is scoop the toothpaste onto the bristles of your toothbrush. **SHOW** the children how you scoop the toothpaste from the rim of the cup.

**WATCH** the children point to the correct picture on the placemat.

**TELL** the children: After the toothpaste is on your toothbrush bristles, point the bristles toward your teeth, and move the toothbrush bristles in little circles against your teeth.

**ASK** the children: Should the bristles touch your gums? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: Yes, they should. Germs like to hide where your gums and your teeth touch each other. Remember, you're using a toothbrush with soft bristles. Because they're soft, they won't hurt your gums.

(*Note:* Some children might say that their gums bleed when they brush them. If gums bleed, that means that the germs have been on the teeth close to the gums for a long time. Tell the children to keep brushing, and the bleeding will stop after a few days. Healthy gums should never bleed.)

**ASK** the children: What parts of your teeth should you brush? **LISTEN** to their answers.

**TELL** the children: Germs stick to every side of your teeth. That means you have to brush every side of your teeth. On the outside where your teeth touch your cheek and lips, on the inside where your teeth touch your tongue, and on top where your teeth chew up your food! After you are done brushing, wipe your mouth with the napkin, and put the napkin in the cup.

**SHOW** the children how you brush your teeth with your toothbrush. (*Note:* Be sure to brush the outside, inside, and top of your teeth.) **WATCH** the children point to the correct picture on the placemat.

Wipe your mouth and put the napkin in the cup. **WATCH** the children point to the correct picture on the placemat.

Throw the cup into the wastebasket. **WATCH** the children point to the correct picture on the placemat.

**TELL** the children: Here's one thing I bet you didn't know. You don't have to rinse your mouth with water after you're done brushing. We will learn why later.

Okay. Let's talk about the best times to brush our teeth. Teeth should be brushed in the morning and before you go to bed at night. Germs try to stick to your teeth all the time. In the morning you want to brush away the germs that stuck to your teeth while you were sleeping. Just before you go to bed at night you want to brush away the germs that stuck to your teeth during the day.

**ASK** the children: Do you think it's okay to brush your teeth more than two times every day? **LISTEN** to their answers and **REINFORCE** the correct answers: It sure is. You can brush your teeth as many times during the day as you want to. No matter how many times you brush during the day, make sure to brush your teeth in the morning and the very last thing you do before you go to bed at night. Those are the two most important times to brush every day.

Now we are going to practice brushing our teeth.

**GIVE** each child his or her toothbrush, a cup with a pea-size amount of fluoridated toothpaste on the rim, and a napkin.

**TELL** the children to scoop the toothpaste onto the bristles of their toothbrush and begin brushing their teeth. Remind them that they need to brush the outside, inside, and top of their teeth using small circular strokes. After they have finished brushing, tell them to wipe their mouth and put the napkin into the cup. The cups should be placed in the wastebasket, and the children should put their toothbrushes away.

*Note:* Encourage the children to use the placemat as a guide if they forget what step is next.

**Sources:**

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Oral Health; Head Start Oral Health Workgroup. 2002. *Head Start Oral Health Awareness Lesson Plans: A Teacher's Guide for Creating Healthy Smiles* (Lesson 3: Brush to Keep Teeth Healthy). Baltimore, MD: Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Oral Health. <http://www.mchoralhealth.org/PDFs/HSLessonPlans.pdf>.

Adapted with permission from Shore Up! Head Start Program. 2010. *Toothbrushing Protocol*. Salisbury, MD: Shore Up! Head Start Program.

**GIVE** *Teeth Talk: A Newsletter for Parents of Children Enrolled in Maryland's Head Start Programs* (Lesson 3: Brush to Keep Teeth Healthy) 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 tell you what times of the day are the best times to brush their teeth.
- Give each child a tube of toothpaste, and tell them to squeeze the amount of toothpaste they should use onto a paper towel or piece of waxed paper.
- Observe each child's toothbrushing technique during the class's toothbrushing time.
- Ask the children to tell you what times of the day are the best times to brush their teeth.



## Small Group Supplemental/ Enrichment Activities

Head Start Domains	Head Start Domain Elements
Creative Arts Expression	Art Music
Language Development	Expressive Language Receptive Language
Literacy Knowledge and Skills	Book Appreciation Phonological Awareness Print Concepts and Conventions
Physical Development and Health	Fine Motor Skills

### *My Toothbrush Rhyme*

**Domains:** Creative Arts Expression, Literacy Knowledge and Skills

**Instructions:** Have the children clap to the rhythm as they repeat the following poem:

I have a little toothbrush  
I hold it very tight  
I brush my teeth each morning  
And then again at night.

**Source:** Adapted from "Dapple-Gray."





## Make a Toothbrush

**Domains:** Creative Arts Expression, Language Development, Physical Development and Health

**Materials (included in curriculum):** Toothbrush-handle tracing template, toothbrush-bristles tracing template

**Materials (not included in curriculum):** Construction paper of various colors, scissors, glue, markers or crayons

**Instructions:**

1. Instruct the children to pick out two pieces of paper. They should be two different colors.
2. Using the tracing templates, help the children trace a toothbrush handle on one piece of paper. Then help them trace the bristles on the other piece of paper.
3. Have the children cut out the toothbrush handles and bristles (or help them).
4. Glue the bristles onto the toothbrush handles.
5. Have the children write their names (or write their names yourself) on the toothbrush handles, and then have them decorate their toothbrushes with the markers or crayons.
6. Ask the children to describe their toothbrushes and explain why they chose their colors and what their designs mean.
7. Hang the toothbrushes around the classroom for all to see.

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## Keeping Teeth Healthy

**Domain:** Creative Arts Expression

**Instructions:** Sing to the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus."

### Keeping Teeth Healthy

The toothbrush in my hand goes brush, brush, brush  
Brush, brush, brush, brush, brush, brush  
The toothbrush in my hand goes brush, brush, brush  
Brush all the germs away.

The toothpaste in my tube goes squeeze, squeeze, squeeze  
squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze, squeeze  
The toothpaste in my tube goes squeeze, squeeze, squeeze  
Squeeze the size of a pea.

The teeth in my mouth go smile, smile, smile  
smile, smile, smile, smile, smile, smile  
The teeth in my mouth go smile, smile, smile  
Smile and keep me healthy.

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

## Lesson Plan Sources

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Council on Clinical Affairs. 2010–2011. Early childhood caries (ECC): Classification, consequences, and preventive strategies. *Pediatric Dentistry* 32(6 Suppl.):41–44. [http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies\\_Guidelines/P\\_ECCClassifications.pdf](http://www.aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/P_ECCClassifications.pdf).

“Dapple-Gray.”

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Shore Up! Head Start Program. 2010. *Toothbrushing Protocol*. Salisbury, MD: Shore Up! Head Start Program.

“The Wheels on the Bus.”

