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.

Head Start Domains and Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head Start Domains</th>
<th>Head Start Domain Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approaches to Learning</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persistence and Attentiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Development</td>
<td>Expressive Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receptive Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>Book Appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print Concepts and Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic and Reasoning</td>
<td>Reasoning and Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Development and Health</td>
<td>Fine Motor Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health Knowledge and Practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:**


**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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head Start Domains</th>
<th>Head Start Domain Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative Arts Expression</td>
<td>Art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Development</td>
<td>Expressive Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receptive Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>Book Appreciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phonological Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Print Concepts and Conventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Development and Health</td>
<td>Fine Motor Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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, 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


“Dapple-Gray.”


“The Wheels on the Bus.”