



Lesson 4

I Can Do a Lot to Keep My Teeth Healthy: Use Toothpaste with Fluoride

Main Lesson Plan

Learning Objectives

After this lesson children will be able to

- Explain that fluoride is in most brands of toothpaste.
- Describe how fluoride can help stop cavities from forming in their teeth.
- Show how much toothpaste they should use when they brush their teeth.

Background Information for Teachers

Fluoride is safe and effective for preventing tooth decay. It works in two ways.

1. It makes it hard for the germs that cause tooth decay to make acids that destroy tooth surfaces.
2. It makes the outer surfaces of the tooth strong, so that acids have trouble destroying the tooth.

Using toothpaste with fluoride is the best way to apply fluoride to the teeth. Toothpaste with fluoride should be used every time a child brushes. Only a small amount of toothpaste should be put on the toothbrush. Children should not rinse their mouths with water or anything else after they brush, so that the fluoride can soak into the teeth.

Source: American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Liaison with Other Groups Committee. 2010–2011. Guidelines on fluoride therapy. *Pediatric Dentistry* 32(6):143–146. http://aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/G_FluorideTherapy.pdf.

Head Start Domains and Elements

Head Start Domains	Head Start Domain Elements
Approaches to Learning	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 Physical Health Status

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

Description: Through discussion and reading, children will be introduced to fluoride in toothpaste. They will learn that fluoride can make their teeth strong and that it can help stop germs from making acids that destroy tooth surfaces.

Materials (included in curriculum): Picture card of a child-size toothbrush with a pea-size amount of toothpaste; *Flora Fluoride to the Rescue* (book); *Teeth Talk: A Newsletter for Parents of Children Enrolled in Maryland's Head Start Programs* (Lesson 4: Fluoride Keeps Teeth Healthy)

Instructions

TELL the children: One of the most important things we can do to keep our teeth healthy is to brush our teeth using toothpaste with fluoride. Fluoride does two things. Fluoride makes our teeth strong. Fluoride makes teeth stronger than the germs that keep trying to make holes in our teeth. Fluoride stops cavities from happening.

Fluoride turns your teeth into super teeth!

The other neat thing about fluoride is that you only need a little bit to make your teeth strong. Remember, when we brush our teeth, we only use a little bit—about the size of a pea.

SHOW the children the picture card of a child's toothbrush with a pea-size amount of toothpaste.

TELL the children: That's all you need.

TELL the children: We want to make sure the fluoride has a long time to soak into our teeth so they can be really, really strong.

ASK the children: What's one thing we can do to keep the fluoride toothpaste on our teeth for a long time? **LISTEN** to their answers.

TELL the children: Instead of rinsing our mouth with water after we brush, we can spit the extra toothpaste out and leave a little bit in our mouth. There's still a little fluoride left on our teeth that will soak in and make our teeth super teeth.

READ *Flora Fluoride to the Rescue* to the children.

GIVE *Teeth Talk: A Newsletter for Parents of Children Enrolled in Maryland's Head Start Programs* (Lesson 4: Fluoride Keeps 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 explain where they can find fluoride.
- Ask the children to describe how fluoride can help stop cavities from forming in their teeth.
- Before the class brushes their teeth, squeeze three different amounts of toothpaste onto a paper plate. One should be a pea-size amount. Ask the children to point to the amount that they should use on their toothbrushes.



Small Group Supplemental/ Enrichment Activities

Head Start Domains	Head Start Domain Elements
Approaches to Learning	Cooperation Initiative and Curiosity Persistence and Attentiveness
Creative Arts Expression	Art Music
Physical Development and Health	Fine Motor Skills Health Status and Practices

Super Tooth Puppet

Domains: Approaches to Learning, Creative Arts Expression, Physical Development and Health

Materials (included in curriculum): One super tooth puppet template for each child

Materials (not included in curriculum): One lunch bag for each child, markers or crayons, glue, scissors

Instructions:

1. Have each child color and cut out the super tooth puppet template.
2. Glue the template pieces to the paper bag.
3. Have the children write their names (or write their names yourself) on their puppets, and post the puppets around the room for all to see.

Source: Adapted with permission from San Diego County Office of Education, Smiles—Children’s Dental Disease Prevention Program. 1988. *Super Tooth Puppet*. San Diego, CA: San Diego County Office of Education: Smiles—Children’s Disease Prevention Program.





I Am Flora

Domain: Creative Arts Expression

Instructions: Sing to the tune of “Frere Jacques.”

I Am Flora

I am Flora, I am Flora
Yes I am, yes I am
I have super powers, I have super powers
Yes I do, yes I do.

I have fluoride, I have fluoride
Yes I do, yes I do
I make teeth strong, I make teeth strong
Yes I do, yes I do.

I make super teeth, I make super teeth
Yes I do, yes I do
They don't get cavities, they don't get cavities
No they don't, no they don't.

Brush with me every day, brush with me everyday
Please do, please do
Morning and night, morning and night
Please do, please do.

Source: Adapted from “Frere Jacques.”

Lesson Plan Sources

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Liaison with Other Groups Committee. 2010–2011. Guidelines on fluoride therapy. *Pediatric Dentistry* 32(6):143–146. http://aapd.org/media/Policies_Guidelines/G_FluorideTherapy.pdf.

“Frere Jacques.”

San Diego County Office of Education, Smiles—Children’s Dental Disease Prevention Program. 1988. *Super Tooth Puppet*. San Diego, CA: San Diego County Office of Education: Smiles—Children’s Disease Prevention Program.