

ORAL HEALTH TEACHING NOTES

Community and Health Services
Public Health Branch



Introduction

Having a healthy mouth is important to our overall health.

Regular dental care can help prevent cavities and other dental problems that lead to diseases/health problems when we get older.

Question (Q):

Why do we have teeth and what do they do?

Answer (A):

Teeth help us chew, talk and smile. A healthy, happy smile helps us to feel confident.

Brushing technique

- Brush down on the uppers and up on the lower teeth
- Brush outside, inside and chewing surfaces
- To brush behind the front teeth use the tip of the brush
- Brush in small circles where the teeth and gums meet to loosen plaque

Question (Q):

When you brush your teeth at home, how much toothpaste should you use?

Answer (A):

A green pea-sized amount is all you need.

How to Use these Teaching Notes

- Select the sections and activities that best fit your teaching plan
- Adapt to grade level/understanding of students

Brushing and flossing

Refer to **Basic Oral Care for School Aged Children**

We brush and floss our teeth to take the plaque off our teeth

- Plaque is a sticky layer of bacteria that constantly forms on our teeth
- It is made up of bacteria and left over food
- When plaque is left on our teeth it changes the sugar in foods and drinks into acid
- This acid attacks tooth enamel (the hard layer that protects teeth) and you can get tooth decay (cavities)
- Plaque also irritates gum tissues and can cause gum disease (gingivitis) and/or bad breath
- **Brush gently, twice a day for two minutes, especially before bedtime**
- Wait 30 minutes after meals/snacks/beverages before brushing
- Rinse with water if you cannot brush

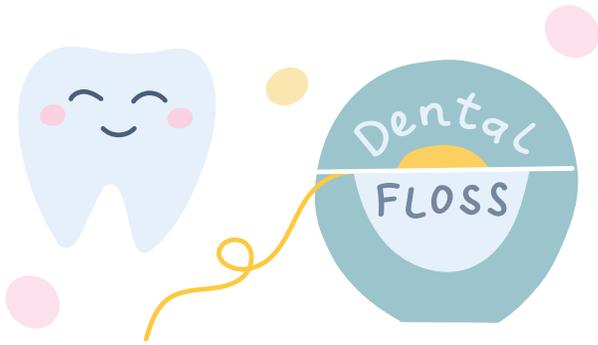


Reminder: Brush for two minutes, twice a day, especially before bedtime

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York Region



Flossing technique

Refer to **Flossing Method**

1. Break off a piece of floss, approximately as long as from your fingertips to your elbow
2. Wrap the floss around your middle fingers until you have just enough left unwrapped to fit between two teeth
3. For the upper teeth, use the index finger and the thumb to guide the floss
4. Use two index fingers to floss the lower teeth
5. Gently see-saw the floss between the teeth
Do not force the floss or press so hard that you cause bleeding or an injury
6. Hug the floss tight to the tooth and move the floss up and down the side of the tooth two or three times until clean.
7. Move the floss to the side of the neighbouring tooth and repeat. Rotate the floss from one middle finger to the other after each tooth so that a new section of floss is in position for the next tooth.
8. Floss before brushing – by first loosening debris and plaque between the teeth, the toothbrush can better brush it away and allow for fluoride in the toothpaste to better reach between the teeth

Tips to help lower acidity in your mouth

- Rinse with water after eating/drinking; especially after consuming acidic foods/drinks or those containing sugar.

The sugar from our foods and drinks mix with the plaque (bacteria) in our mouth, creating acid.

Acid breaks down the hard layer of the tooth called enamel. When our teeth are attacked by acid a hole in the surface of the tooth (a cavity) can begin to form.

Limit sugary or sticky foods and rinse with water after eating and drinking to help reduce the acid in your mouth.

- Chew sugar free gum
- Limit drinks high in sugar, like juices, sodas and sports drinks – use a straw to minimize exposure of teeth to sugar

For other oral health teaching information/resources/activities

York Region Public Health provides more oral health information/resources. Visit york.ca/dental

Other topics

April is Oral Health Month

National Oral Health Month (April) is a good time for students across Canada to review their dental health routines and make changes, if needed, to improve their oral health routines.

Q: What can you do to improve your oral health routine?

Suggested Activity: **Monthly Brushing Chart**

Dental Screening/York Region Public Health

- Registered Dental Hygienists and Certified Dental Assistants come to our school every year to check our teeth, to make sure our mouths are healthy
- The hygienist will use a flashlight and a clean, one-time use mirror to take a quick look in your mouth
- Every child in York Region can have their teeth checked at a Public Health dental clinic because healthy teeth are important for our health
- Public Health provides many services and programs to help the people who live in our community to be healthy

Handouts and resources

Refer to **Dental Health Resources** for a variety of resources to share.

You are also receiving information today to share and read together with your parents. Maybe you'll learn even more new things about how to take good care of your teeth!

Talk with your parents about what you learned today.

Infographic: **Tips for a Healthy Smile**

More questions and answers

Q: How many times a day should you brush?

A: Twice a day

Q: For how long?

A: For two minutes

Q: And when is the most important time to brush?

A: Before bedtime

Q: Did you learn anything new today that you did not know before?

