

ORAL HEALTH

Resources and Activities for Elementary Students



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Oral Health Overview

Oral health contributes to our overall health and wellbeing. Preventative activities such as brushing, flossing, and regular check-ups can contribute to improved oral health. It has been shown that “school-based oral health education interventions can have positive impacts on behavioural outcomes among children” (Public Health Ontario, 2017). In this resource package you will find engaging activities, videos and information that can be used in the classroom to teach students about oral hygiene practices.

While oral health fits well with the kindergarten-grade 4 curricula, it is also appropriate to use with any grade where oral hygiene is an identified focus. It can also be used as a leadership opportunity for intermediate/senior student helpers.

When teaching about oral health, messaging about food and drink and how they can impact our teeth may come up. There are many factors that impact our oral health including genetics, oral hygiene, and nutrition. Review [this article](#) by Registered Dietitian, Raschelle Sabourin, for how to support oral health using a food neutral lens. A food neutral approach involves not categorizing foods/beverages as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and helps to create a non-judgmental space for children to feel safe eating a variety of foods.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



To provide feedback or if you notice missing or outdated resources in this kit, please email healthyschools@mlhu.on.ca

Discussion Points

Here are some principles to keep in mind when discussing oral health with your students:

BRUSHING

- 
- Brushing your teeth removes food and bacteria from your mouth
 - Brush twice a day for two minutes each time “2 for 2 is what you do!”
 - If you can spit, use toothpaste with fluoride, but only a pea-sized amount
 - When you are done brushing, spit out the toothpaste
 - Use a soft-bristled brush and replace it every three months, or after being sick

FLOSSING

- 
- Wash your hands before putting them in your mouth, including when you floss
 - Floss is a string-like material that gets between the teeth, where the tooth brush cannot
 - There are different flossing tools available
 - You should floss your teeth once every day

DENTAL CARE

- 
- Regular check-ups with a dentist or dental hygienist are important to catch problems with your teeth or gums when they are small
 - The dental hygienists cleans teeth and helps identify problems or reasons to see the dentist
 - Sometimes dental hygienists come to the school to do check-ups

FOOD AND DRINK

- 
- Our teeth need a variety of nutrients to stay strong
 - Drinking water throughout the day is good for our teeth and bodies
 - When eating, our bodies produce more saliva, which helps protect our teeth by washing away food particles.

CAVITIES

- 
- Bacteria in your mouth like to eat leftover food particles, producing acid
 - Acid damages the outer layer of the tooth and can cause a cavity or a hole in the tooth
 - Drinking water throughout the day, brushing, flossing, and getting regular check-ups with a dentist or dental hygienist can help prevent cavities

SPORTS GUARDS

- 
- Wearing a mouthguard during sports protects your teeth from falls, balls and pucks
 - Replacing an adult tooth that gets knocked out is very expensive
 - Mouth guards can be purchased at a sporting goods store or be custom-made by a dentist
 - Avoid chewing on your mouth guard so that it is not damaged and can protect your teeth

Suggestions for classroom teaching:

- Using the [Discussion Points](#), discuss brushing and flossing with your class.
- Show a [video](#) to demonstrate proper toothbrushing technique.
- Use the Printable Toothbrush Activity on the next page to give students hands-on practice.
- Have oral health themed storybooks available in your classroom library.
- Print colouring sheets or puzzle cubes for students to complete in class and encourage them share with their parents and/or caregivers. (pages 7 & 8)



Printable Toothbrush Activity

Print and laminate the [Toothbrush Activity Print-out](#). Add “food and bacteria” to the teeth using a whiteboard marker.

Example:

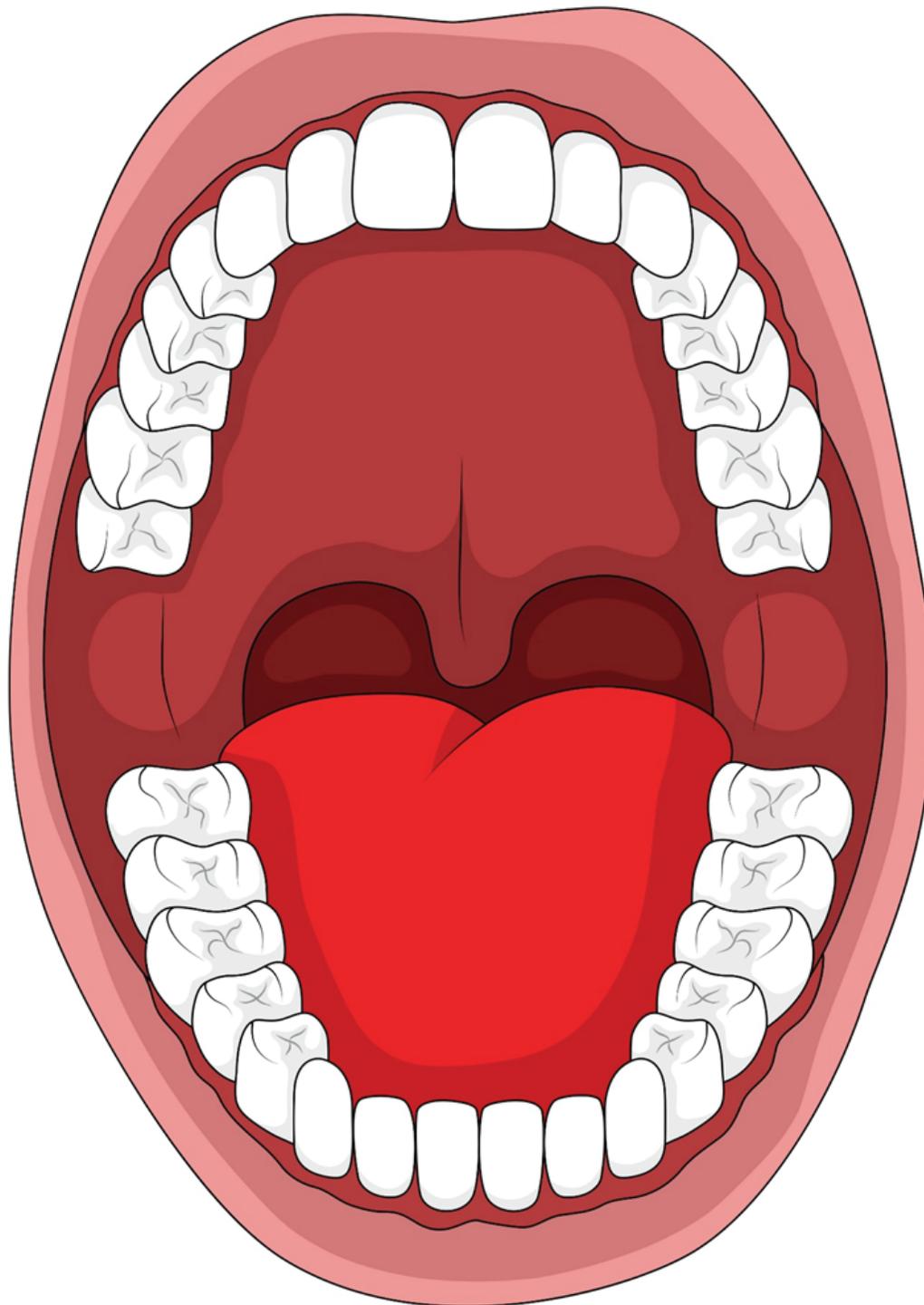


Encourage students to remove the “food and bacteria” using a dry toothbrush.

Critical thinking questions:

- If it takes less than 2 minutes to remove everything we see, why do we need to brush for 2 minutes?
 - We cannot see all the food and bacteria on our teeth, brushing for 2 minutes and brushing all the surfaces of the teeth helps remove what we cannot see.
- How else can we remove food and bacteria from our teeth?
 - Flossing once a day
- When we brush our teeth at home, why is it important to use toothpaste?
 - Toothpaste helps clean our teeth and the fluoride in toothpaste helps make our teeth strong.
 - The fluoride in toothpaste is good for helping make teeth strong, but we should avoid swallowing toothpaste

Toothbrush Activity Print-out



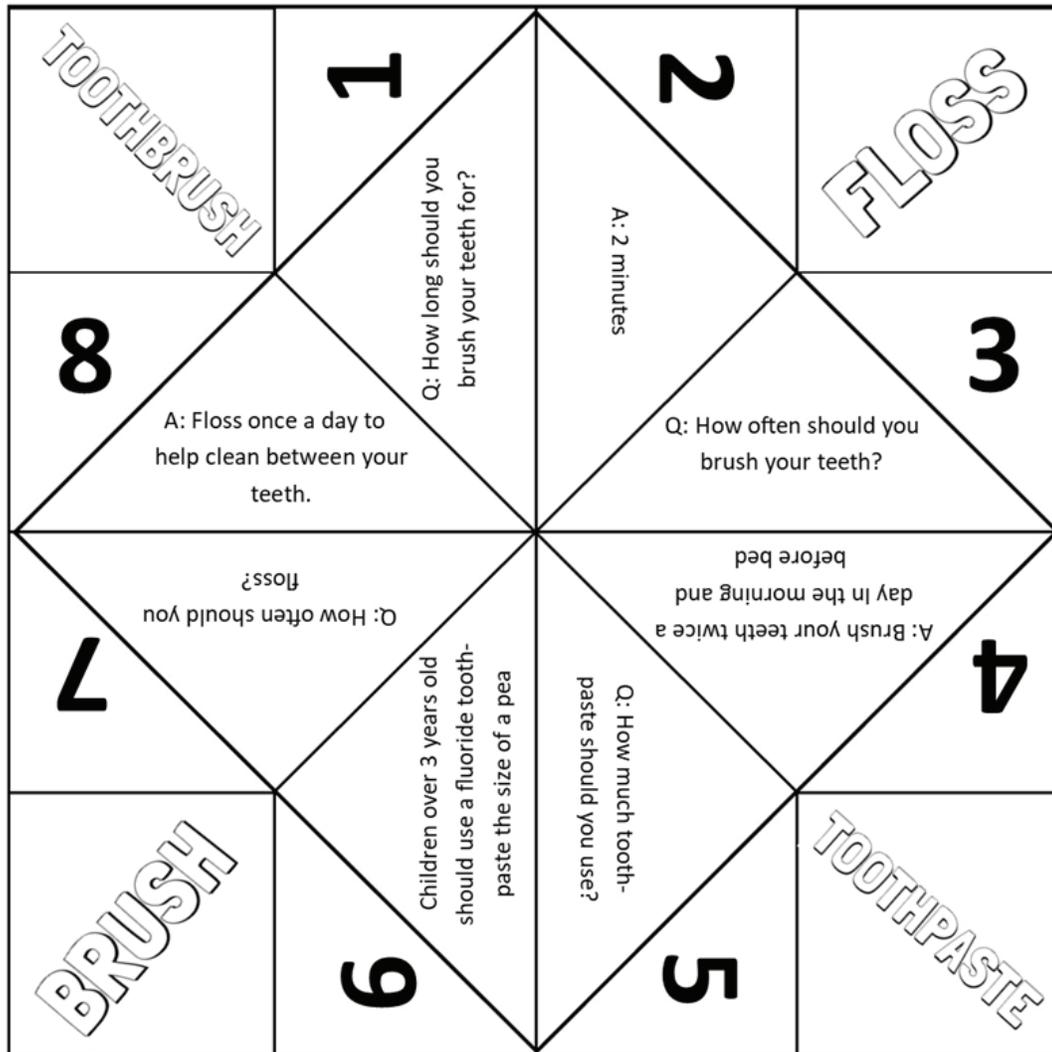
2 TIMES A DAY FOR 2 MINUTES



2 TIMES A DAY FOR 2 MINUTES
Brushing keeps my teeth clean

Name: _____

Oral Health Puzzle Cube



Directions

1. Print and cut around outside of the puzzle cube
2. Fold in half and in half again
3. Open up, turn over (so top is blank), and fold each corner into the middle
4. Turn over and repeat
5. Turn over so you can see the corner words (brush, floss, toothpaste, toothbrush)
6. Slide your thumb and finger behind two of the corners and press together so they bend around and touch
7. Turn over and repeat with your thumb and finger of the other hand for the two corner words
8. All the corner words should now be at the front with centres touching
9. Spell out the words and count out the numbers to ask trivia questions

Oral Health Videos



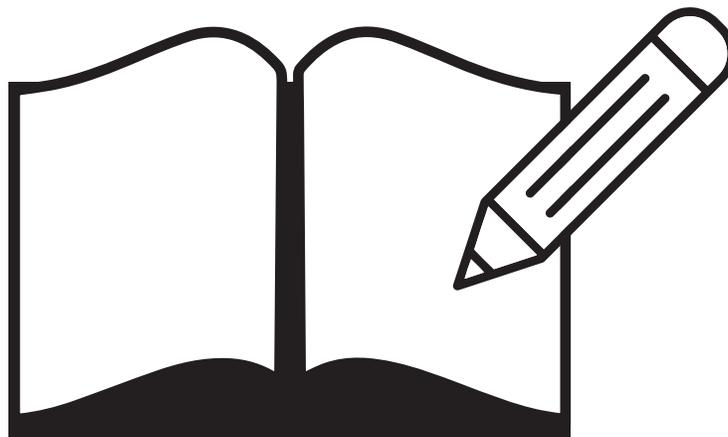
GRADES K - 2

ToothTalkTV: Learn How to Brush Your Teeth Properly with Baby Tooth
https://youtu.be/R_mgHakWC1g

GRADES 1 - 4

SciShow Kids: Why Do We Brush Our Teeth?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOebfGGcjVw>

Additional Activities



GRADES 2 - 5

Dental Hygiene Canada:

Activity Sheet 1
Activity Sheet 2
Activity Sheet 3
Activity Sheet 4
Brushing Chart

GRADES 6 - 8

Canadian Dental Association:

Eggsperiment: How Fluoride Protects Our Teeth (français)

References

Public Health Ontario. Evidence Brief: Behavioural impacts of school-based oral health education among children. 2017.

Raschelle Sabourin, RD. How to Approach Oral Health Without Diet Culture. Nuton Blog : <https://nuton.ca/how-to-approach-oral-health-without-diet-culture/>). 2022.

Image sources: canva.com