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Oral Health

FOR MOTHERS & CHILDREN



EDUCATOR MANUAL

Canada

Our mission is to help the people of Canada
maintain and improve their health.

Health Canada

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Introduction

Educator Manual

Oral Health During Pregnancy

Oral Health for Mothers and Children is a learning circle for pregnant women, mothers and caregivers of young children. As an **Oral Health Educator**, you will be providing oral health information to people in your community. Sometimes, you will meet people in a group, and sometimes you will meet with one or two people at a time.

You might want to ask people to fill out the Questionnaire during your first meeting. Then, you can make plans for future meetings and discuss the subjects that they said were important to them. It is good to present the oral health ideas one at a time. If you try to present **too much information** all at once, people may not remember everything you discussed.

Oral Health for Mothers and Children is based on a joint project between Trish Goulet, an Aboriginal dental hygienist from northern Manitoba, and Deborah Ball, a dental therapist who works for Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch in New Brunswick.

What is the Educator Manual for?

This manual will help you use the **overheads** included in the kit. You will be using the overheads when you do classroom and group presentations. The overheads provide *an outline* of each subject and pictures to help the audience understand the subject. This manual will *give you more information* about the points on the overheads. They follow the same order as the manual.

What else is in the kit?

The following material is included in the kit and can be used as needed.

1. A **Poster** that you can use to announce when a presentation will be held.
2. A **Mail-out** that you can send to people's homes.
3. An **Invitation** to encourage attendance.
4. A booklet called **Reminders For When You Go Home** that you can give to people who attend the learning circles.



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Section 1

Pregnant Women and Mothers' Oral Health

Health Risks of Poor Oral Health

Poor oral health can cause tooth decay, periodontal (gum and bone) disease and infections, as well as pain, tooth loss and bad breath. People with periodontal disease has been linked to a higher risk of general health problems, such as heart disease and diabetes.

New studies show that pregnant women who have periodontal disease (gum and bone) in the mouth may be more likely to have:

- low birth weight babies, and
- babies who are born too early (pre-term births).

Healthy Eating During Pregnancy

A healthy diet during pregnancy is important for the baby's teeth. Tooth buds for the **baby teeth** begin to form during the fifth or sixth week of pregnancy. Tooth buds for the **adult teeth** begin to form during the fourth or fifth month of pregnancy. When the baby is born, the baby teeth are almost completely formed and some of the adult teeth have started to form.

It is important that pregnant women eat the right kinds of food and in the right amounts. To build strong teeth and bones in children, the mother needs to have enough calcium, Vitamins A, C, and D as well as protein and phosphorous. Pregnant women should focus on choosing foods from the four food groups in *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*.

You can get a copy of the *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* on the Internet at:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food_guide_rainbow_e.html

or by writing to

Publications Health Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9

A baby's teeth, bones, muscles and heart need large amounts of calcium to grow. During pregnancy and breastfeeding, the calcium a baby needs comes from the food the mother eats. If the food she eats does not contain enough calcium, the mother's body will get the calcium it needs from her own bones.

Vitamin D is needed to help the body use calcium to form teeth and bones. Pregnant women should include three to four servings of milk a day to meet their Vitamin D needs. Yogurt and cheese are almost as healthy as milk, but they do not contain Vitamin D. If a pregnant woman cannot drink milk (is intolerant because her body cannot digest it), a doctor or nurse may prescribe a calcium supplement.

It is important for pregnant women to eat healthy snacks between meals so they can meet their daily nutritional needs. The snacks should come from the four food groups of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. Soft, sweet and sticky snacks that are high in carbohydrates and sugar are not a good choice. Teeth should be cleaned after snacking to prevent cavities.

Dental Care During Pregnancy

All pregnant women and women hoping to become pregnant should have regular dental care by a dental professional. The dental professional should be informed if a woman is pregnant or not, since this can make a difference in a woman's oral health. A woman who has a sore mouth or pain from dental disease or infection will not find it easy to eat healthy during pregnancy. Dental infection may cause other problems, too. If a woman needs to have dental treatment, the best time to do it is between four and six months (second trimester). However, dental treatment can be given at any time if the need for treatment is great and if the woman's health will benefit.

Smoking or Chewing Tobacco During Pregnancy

Smoking and chewing among women is linked to: miscarriage, premature births and stillbirths, low birthweight babies, reduced breast milk, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), breathing difficulties, slowed growth in infants and many gum diseases.

If a pregnant woman regularly breathes second-hand smoke, it can have almost the same effects as smoking or chewing.



Pregnancy Gingivitis

Gingivitis is an inflammation of the gums. During pregnancy, changes in hormones may make a woman's gums more sensitive to the bacteria in plaque. This can cause pregnancy gingivitis. Women who do not keep their mouths and teeth clean (poor oral hygiene) are at a much greater risk of getting pregnancy gingivitis.

Pregnancy gingivitis may cause:

- Swollen, red gums
- Bleeding gums
- Sore and sensitive teeth

When pregnant, a woman who already has gum problems may find that the problem gets worse. However, this does not need to happen. A woman can prevent gingivitis by:

- brushing and flossing
- visiting a dental professional

If the woman has any concerns about the health of her mouth, she should see a dental professional as soon as possible. As an **Oral Health Educator**, you can advise women to continue brushing and flossing daily and to use a salt-water rinse for a few days.

Diabetes and Oral Health

Diabetes is a serious concern in First Nations and Inuit communities in Canada. A person with diabetes produces little or no insulin, or insulin that does not work the way it should. Everyone needs insulin to help their bodies digest sugars.

There are 2 types of diabetes. People with Type 1 diabetes can control their diabetes with insulin. People with Type 2 diabetes can control the disease by making lifestyle changes (such as changing their eating habits, and exercising). Nine out of 10 First Nations and Inuit who are diagnosed with diabetes have Type 2 diabetes.

Gestational diabetes happens to some women when they are pregnant. It usually goes away once the baby is born. These women are at a higher risk of developing diabetes later in life. This kind of diabetes affects 3 to 12% of pregnant women.

Diabetes may affect dental health and dental health can affect diabetes. A mouth infection can raise blood sugar levels, which may affect the amount of medication needed. People with diabetes are more likely to get infections and their bodies take longer to heal. They need to see a dental professional regularly and should report any pain in the teeth or gums to a dental professional or doctor.

People with diabetes often complain that they have a “dry mouth” (xerostomia). They may have only a little spit (saliva) in their mouth. Because of this, they may have an even higher risk of dental disease (such as cavities or periodontal disease). Chewing sugarless gum and sipping water will help to create more spit. A sugarless gum containing xylitol will also help to prevent cavities. It is important for people with diabetes to clean the mouth well every day, since some of the natural cleaning that comes from spit has been lost.

Diabetes affects blood circulation in the gums and in the bones that support our teeth. When circulation is poor, the body has a harder time fighting infection. It can also take longer to heal.

Recent research shows that children who are breastfed have a lower risk of getting both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. Breastfeeding may also reduce the amount of insulin that a mother with diabetes needs.



People with diabetes should go to a dental professional if they have any of the following:

- pain in the mouth, not able to eat
- bad breath or bad taste in the mouth
- red, swollen or bleeding gums
- teeth that are painful, loose or move around
- the way teeth bite together feels different
- gums are sore under and around dentures
- orthodontic wires or denture clasps are cutting into the gums

Dental Habits After Pregnancy

Did you know that cavities (tooth decay) are an infection?

Mothers and other adults who care for young children should make sure they have a clean mouth and no cavities.

Research shows that the bacteria* that cause tooth decay **can be passed from person-to-person**. This means the bacteria can move from a mother, father or any other caregiver to the baby. Babies are not born with these bacteria. The bacteria are passed from one person to another. How are bacteria usually passed to babies?

- Chewing food first and then giving it to a baby.
- Sharing food can pass the bacteria from person-to-person.
- Sharing spoons or other utensils.
- Blowing on food can pass on the bacteria.
- Cleaning or holding a soother in the mouth.

If the mother or caregiver's mouth is clean and free from tooth decay then fewer bacteria can be passed to the baby.

* bacteria = a germ known as streptococci mutans



Understanding and Removing Plaque

What is plaque?

Plaque is a thin sticky coating that forms on teeth and gums, even in a baby's mouth. The bacteria in plaque use sugar from all foods to produce acids that can attack the surfaces of the teeth and gums. Over time, this can cause :

- tooth decay
- periodontal disease (gum and bone disease) in the mouth
- tooth loss

Dental plaque is soft and can be removed by cleaning the teeth and gums.

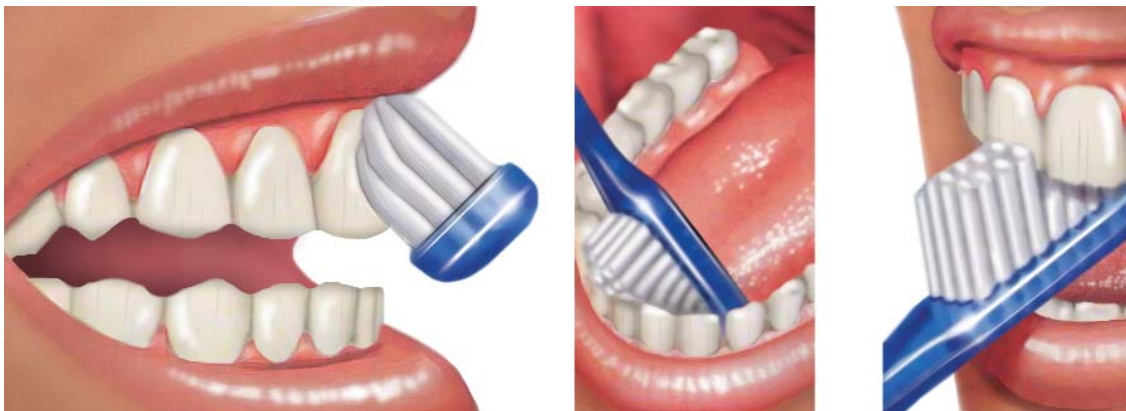
When people remove plaque from their teeth and gums every day, they can prevent dental diseases.



The dental photo courtesy of Population Health Unit
Keewatin Yatthe', Mamawetan Churchill River & Athabasca Health Regions.

Cleaning with a Toothbrush

1. Use a soft toothbrush
2. Point the bristles toward the gums
3. Gently wiggle the toothbrush back and forth
4. Brush all sides of your teeth
 - the inside (tongue side)
 - the outside (cheek side)
 - the top where you chew
5. Brush your tongue



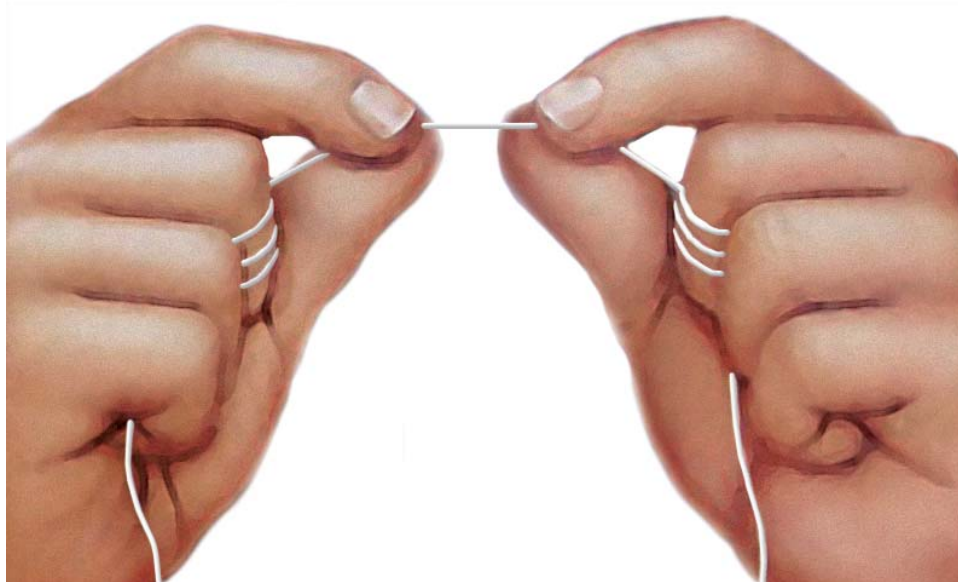
Brushing and flossing once a day helps to prevent cavities and gum disease.



Cleaning with Floss

Teach people how to floss only after they are brushing their teeth regularly.

1. Pull out 40 - 50 cm (one arm's length) of dental floss from the container. Wrap the ends of the floss around each of your middle fingers, leaving about 2 - 3 cm of floss between your two fingers.
2. Use your thumb and index fingers to hold the floss in place.
3. Wrap the floss around the tooth into a "C" shape. Gently slide the floss up and down between your tooth and your gums. This will remove dental plaque.
4. Do the same thing in the space between the next two teeth.
5. Use a new section of floss each time you move to a new space between teeth.



Section 1: Pregnant Women and Mothers' Oral Health



Flossing may take some time to learn. Some people find it easier to learn to floss when they are looking in a mirror. They can start by flossing the front teeth and once they are comfortable with that, move to the back teeth. When people know how to floss, it takes just a few minutes a day.



Section 2

Oral Health for Babies

Infant Oral Health

When mothers and caregivers clean their own teeth regularly, they set a good example for children. This will help children develop good oral health habits. When mothers and caregivers learn to keep children's mouths and teeth clean (good oral hygiene), they are starting them toward a lifetime of good oral health.

Plaque grows in a baby's mouth even before they have teeth. The bacteria in plaque cause dental diseases, so it is important to remove plaque from the baby's mouth.

Here's how mothers and caregivers can help children enjoy good oral health.

- When a woman is planning to get pregnant, she should have all dental treatment done and she should make regular dental appointments while she's pregnant.
- If a woman is breastfeeding, she should remove her nipple from the child's mouth when the feeding is finished. Women should avoid continuous, all night feedings.
- If the baby is fed from a bottle, remove the bottle once the child is finished feeding.
- Breast milk, formula or water are the **only liquids** that should be in a baby bottle.
- Pacifiers/soothers/dummies should not be dipped in sweets (such as sugar, honey or corn syrup). It's better for infants to suck on an approved soother (an orthodontic pacifier) than on a thumb or finger.
- The baby's gums should be gently wiped after each feeding and before bed. A soft, wet cloth (gauze) or a wet baby facecloth can be used to remove any milk or formula. Cleaning of the mouth should continue as teeth arrive.
- Babies and children should drink juice in a cup, not from a bottle.
- Babies should not be using a baby bottle after 1 year of age.
- Toddlers should not carry around a baby bottle all day.

How to Clean an Infant's Mouth

It can be hard to clean a baby's mouth because they move a lot. Here are some tips that will make it easier for parents to do it at home. As an **Oral Health Educator**, you may need to visit a mother or caregiver to help them feel comfortable cleaning the child's mouth.

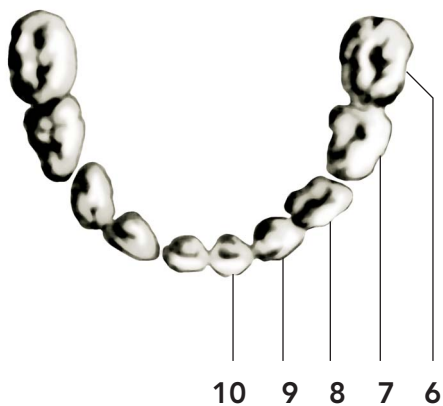
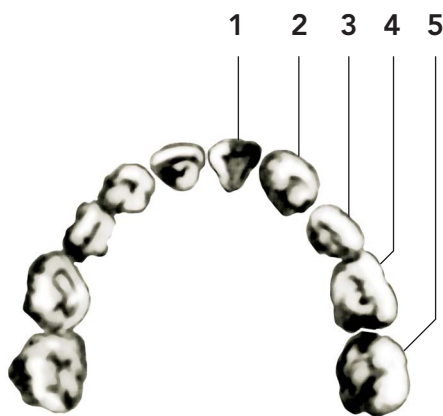
- Be prepared! Have a soft, wet cloth (gauze) or facecloth right beside you.
- Hold the baby in your arms. Wrap the damp cloth or gauze around your pointer (index) finger.
- Gently wipe the baby's gums from back to front, rubbing them and taking away any leftover milk or formula.
- A small wet and soft toothbrush can be used as soon as teeth begin to appear in the baby's mouth.
- Clean the baby's teeth everyday.



When Do Baby Teeth Arrive?

All 20 baby (or primary) teeth should break through (erupt) by the time the child is 2 or 3 years old. Remember every child is different. Some children will get teeth before or after the times you see on this picture.

Eruption Chart



First Teeth

	When teeth "come in"	When teeth "fall out"
Upper		
1 - Central Incisors	7-12 mos.	6-8 yrs.
2 - Lateral Incisors	9-13 mos.	7-8 yrs.
3 - Canines(cuspids)	16-22 mos.	10-12 yrs.
4 - First Molars	13-19 mos.	9-11 yrs.
5 - Second Molars	25-33 mos.	10-12 yrs.
Lower		
6 - Second Molars	20-31 mos.	10-12 yrs.
7 - First Molars	12-18 mos.	9-11 yrs.
8 - Canines(cuspids)	16-23 mos.	9-12 yrs.
9 - Lateral Incisors	7-16 mos.	7-8 yrs.
10 - Central Incisors	6-10 mos.	6-8 yrs.

A Teething Child

Baby's teeth can break through (erupt) as early as 4 months. Getting new baby teeth can continue until the child is 2 ½ to 3 years old. It can be a difficult time for some children and parents. Other children will get all of their teeth without having any pain or upset.

Signs of teething

The child...

- seems to be in a bad mood, a lot of crying
- seems nervous and gets upset easily
- does not want to eat (loss of appetite)
- seems to have a cold
- has an upset stomach (gastrointestinal problems and diarrhea)
- drools a lot (The drool should be cleaned from the child's face or neck, so it does not create a rash)
- chews on fingers, toys or other objects
- has swelling inside the mouth where the teeth are going to break through
- wakes up during the night

A fever during teething should be checked by the doctor

How to help a child who is teething:

- Give the child something firm to bite on. Let the child chew on a teething ring or a wet facecloth
- Rub the gums with a facecloth, a clean finger or a spoon
- Avoid teething biscuits. They contain sugar and may cause tooth decay
- Avoid gels that are rubbed on the gums. The child may swallow the medication
- Avoid pain medicines from the drug store (over-the-counter medications); instead, the parents should ask a doctor, dental professional or pharmacist for advice
- Avoid tying a teething ring around the child's neck

This can be a painful time for a child and a difficult time for parents.



Early Childhood Tooth Decay

Tooth decay is very common and has become a serious health problem for young children in many First Nations and Inuit communities. It can cause pain, speech problems, and tooth spacing (or orthodontic) problems later in the child's life. It can also prevent children from eating. Children with a lot of tooth decay may not feel good about themselves (poor self esteem), especially if other children tease them about their appearance.

Tooth decay in early childhood can also cause other health risks later in life. For example, the child may need to be anaesthetized for an operation to fix the tooth decay.

Once a month, check the baby's teeth by lifting the baby's lip to look for early signs of decay. Some signs of tooth decay are:

- teeth seem to be brown or yellow
- white spots on the teeth or "chalky" areas
- grooves or changes to the front teeth

If there are any signs of tooth decay, the child should be examined by a dental professional right away. Early treatment can prevent the problem from getting worse.



The dental photos are courtesy of Dr. Herenia P. Lawrence, Associate Professor of Community Dentistry at the University of Toronto, and the Sioux Lookout Zone Dental Department.

What Causes Early Childhood Tooth Decay?

- **Dental research** shows that the bacteria that cause dental decay can be passed to the baby from a mother, father or other caregiver. Babies are not born with this bacteria (known as streptococci mutans).
- **Plaque** - Plaque is always forming in everyone's mouth, including a baby's mouth. The bacteria living in plaque mix with sugars to produce acids that attack the surfaces of the teeth. This causes tooth decay. The bacteria (streptococci mutans) are "fed" when people eat a lot of sugar or starchy foods (carbohydrates). *Plaque should be completely removed from the teeth every day.*
- Putting juice or other sweet liquids (such as pop, sweet tea, sweet fruit drinks) in a baby bottle and letting the child carry it around for a long time will cause tooth decay. **Breast milk, water or formula** are the only liquids that should be put in a baby bottle.
- **Dipping the end of a pacifier** in honey, sugar or corn syrup can increase the rate of decay.
- **Breastfeeding without a rest or putting the baby to bed with a bottle** - If a baby always falls asleep with any liquid other than water in the mouth, the liquid may pool around the baby's teeth. This may cause tooth decay. Two other causes of tooth decay are: breastfeeding or bottle feeding without taking a break and letting the nipple stay in the baby's mouth when the feeding is over. The baby's mouth should be cleaned after each feeding.
- **Using the baby bottle too long.** Using a baby bottle after the child is 1 year old increases the risk of early childhood tooth decay. This happens because the child's teeth are exposed to the sugars found in any liquid other than water. Babies should be drinking from a cup by 1 year of age (NOT a sippy cup).

We can prevent tooth decay in early childhood



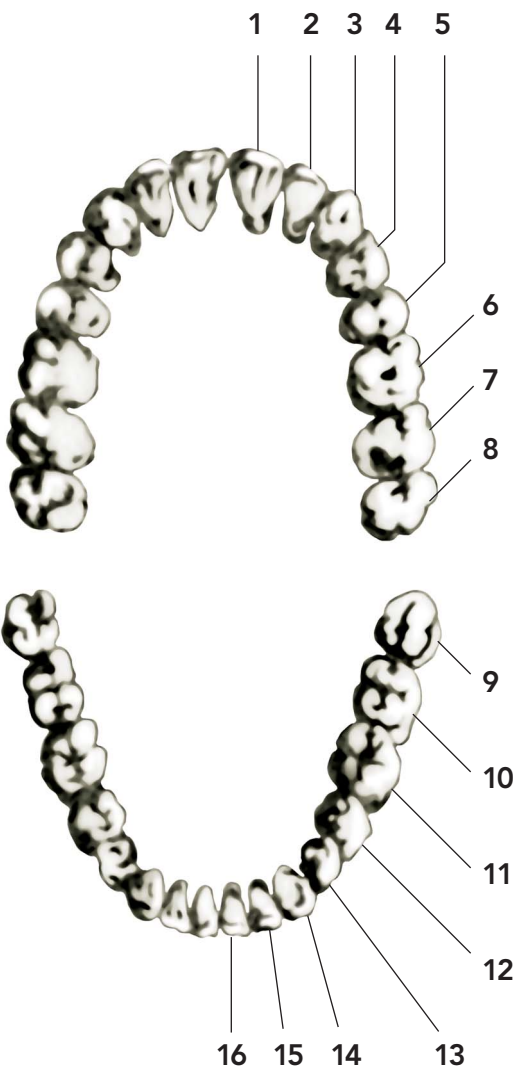
How to Prevent Early Childhood Tooth Decay

- Breast milk, water or formula are the only liquids that should be put in a baby bottle.
- Babies should not sleep or nap with a baby bottle.
- Remove the nipple from the baby's mouth when a feeding is finished.
- Avoid dipping the end of a pacifier in anything sweet.
- Clean the baby's mouth after every feeding.
- Get rid of the baby bottle by 1 year of age. Use a cup, not a sippy cup.
- A child's first dental examination should be around 1 year of age.
- Have flouride varnish applied to the child's teeth.
 - Flouride strengthens the enamel (outer surface) of the teeth and can stop the decay from getting worse.



The dental photos are courtesy of Dr. Herenia P. Lawrence, Associate Professor of Community Dentistry at the University of Toronto, and the Sioux Lookout Zone Dental Department.

When Do Adult Teeth Arrive?



Permanent Teeth

	When teeth "come in"
Upper	
1 - Central Incisors	7-8 yrs.
2 - Lateral Incisors	8-9 yrs.
3 - Canine(cuspids)	11-12 yrs.
4 - First Bicuspid	10-11 yrs.
5 - Second Bicuspid	10-12 yrs.
6 - First Molars	6-7 yrs.
7 - Second Molars	12-13 yrs.
8 - Third Molars	17-21 yrs.
Lower	
9 - Third Molars	17-21 yrs.
10 - Second Molars	11-13 yrs.
11 - First Molars	6-7 yrs.
12 - Second Bicuspid	11-12 yrs.
13 - First Bicuspid	10-12 yrs.
14 - Canines(cuspids)	9-10 yrs.
15 - Lateral Incisors	7-8 yrs.
16 - Central Incisors	6-7 yrs.



Section 3

Healthy Eating (Nutrition)

How Foods Affect Oral Health

Sugars in food are a major cause of tooth decay. **ALL** of the sugars in food can be broken down by plaque to form acids. This causes tooth decay.

- Reduce sugar intake.
- Only eat sugary foods at mealtime.
- Limit the number of snacks and how often snacks are eaten.
- Choose snacks from the four food groups of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*.
- Avoid snacks and foods that are sticky.

It is very important to limit the amount of sugar eaten between meal and how often sugary foods are eaten.

Eating a healthy diet will improve both oral health and basic health.

Choosing Snacks For Healthy Teeth

Snacks for healthy teeth

- they clear from the mouth quickly
- they are low in sugar

Use caution when serving the following snacks because:

- they are high in sugar or starches
- they stick to the teeth
- they should only be served with a meal
- teeth need to be brushed after eating them

Milk
 Cheese**
 Unsweetened Yogurt

Unsweetened Fruit Juices
 Vegetable Juices
 Raw Fruit *
 Raw Vegetables *

Bannock
 Bread, Rolls
 Bagels
 Pita Bread
 English Muffins
 Low salt crackers

Smoked or dried fish
 Smoked or dried meat
 Rabbit/Moose/Venison
 Eggs

Pizza
 Nuts and seeds *
 Plain popcorn *
 Sugarless gum with Xylitol** *

Candies, breath mints
 Candy bars
 Cakes, pies, cookies
 Doughnuts

Granola Bars and Cereal Bars
 Sugar-coated cereals

Dried fruits, raisins, fruit leathers
 Fruit-flavoured drinks and juices

Milk Puddings
 Ice Cream
 Chocolate Milk
 Sweetened Yogurt
 Popsicles
 Frozen dairy treats

Coffee or tea with sugar
 Regular Soft Drinks
 Regular Gum*

Potato Chips*
 Cheese-flavoured chips and snacks*
 Flavoured popcorn *

* Possible choking hazard for the very young

** Has been shown to help prevent cavities



Hidden Sugars

Make a display to show parents where the sugars are

Have you ever talked to a parent whose child has a lot of tooth decay, and the mother tells you “he doesn’t eat sugar”, he just has “soft teeth”? When we talk about eating sugar, many parents think we are talking about the child eating sugar directly out of the sugar bowl or eating a lot of candy. Many do not realize that there are hidden sugars in almost everything we eat.

A useful way to show parents the hidden sugars in common foods is setting up this display. This display can be used in individual sessions with parents or with groups of people in prenatal classes, school classrooms, health fairs, or other kinds of gatherings in your community.

Here’s what you need to make your Display:

- Small, clear glass or plastic containers for each food item you will display
 - i.e. spice jars or glass bottles
 - White sugar (granulated sugar)
 - A measuring spoon that says “**1 teaspoon**” (not tablespoon)
 - Packages of various food items
 - We suggest you use common foods from stores that people shop in
 - Include low sugar foods, sugar-free foods and high sugar foods
 - A pen or marker
 - Labels to identify the bottles
 - Clear plastic wrap
 - Construction paper
 - A cardboard or plastic box to keep your display in
1. Find the **Nutrition Information** label on the package of food. Write down the serving size and carbohydrates as they are listed on the label. Divide the total carbohydrates by 4. This gives the total teaspoons of sugar per serving.

For example:

A breakfast cereal for children has the following information on the **Nutrition Information** label. The label says there are 27g of Carbohydrates in each 1 cup serving. Divide 27 by 4. The result is 6.75 teaspoons of sugar in each 1 cup serving.

2. Do the same calculation for all the foods you want to display. Then, measure the amount of sugar in each food item using your measuring spoon. Put the sugar into one of the small, clear bottles.
 - Write the number of teaspoons of sugar on a label on the top of the bottle.
 - Write the name of the food on the bottom of the bottle.
3. Make a label using construction paper. To do this, write the serving size for the food at one end of a square piece of paper. For example, the serving size may be 1 cup of breakfast cereal, 8 soda crackers, or 2 cookies. Fold the construction paper in half and stand it up so people can see the writing on one side.
4. To use the display, put each empty food package/wrapper in front of its display label. Put the bottle of sugar for each food item near its display label.
5. Store the display in a box so that it's easy to carry around.

Most people are amazed at the amount of sugar in foods that they thought were healthy. Include a variety of foods that are common in your area. Some examples are granola bars, chocolate bars, breakfast cereals, instant oatmeal, cookies, bread, digestive cookie, ketchup, jam etc. Add a few unsweetened items for comparison.

You can also turn the display into a guessing game. Here are two ways to do this:

1. Make a list of the packaged foods on the left side of a piece of paper. Make a list of the amounts of sugar on the right side of the same sheet of paper. Mix up the list of sugar amounts so that the amount for each food item does not appear across from the food it refers to. Photocopy the page and give each person a copy. Ask them to draw a line from the food item on the left to the sugar amount on the right that they think goes with that food. Give them 5 or 10 minutes to complete the exercise. People may want to work in pairs. Limit the list to 7 or 8 items.



2. Use a flipchart. List 4 or 5 food items and the sugar amount, as described above. Invite people to come to the display table to see the food items and the bottles of sugar. Then, ask the group to guess what the sugar amount is for each food item. When all the guessing is over, rip off the top sheet and show people the correct answers on a sheet you have prepared, under the top sheet.

Teaching Parents to Read the Nutrition Information and Ingredients List

Nutrition Information on packaged food

Teach parents how to read the Nutrition Information label on packaged foods. Carbohydrates will always be listed on the label. Sometimes, there will be another line that says “Sugars”, under the carbohydrates heading. The listing for sugars on the box label will not be the same as the teaspoon calculation we use in the display. It’s not the same because the package label lists sugars in grams, not teaspoons.

Ingredients List on packaged food

The Ingredients List tells you all the ingredients in the food. If any kind of sugar is listed as the first, second or third ingredient on the Ingredients List, you know that the food is high in sugar. Tell parents the different names for sugar and other sweeteners. The names include **glucose, fructose, lactose, liquid invert sugar, honey or corn syrup**. Ask parents to check their child’s favourite foods at home.

Fat Content

The fat content of food is also important when choosing healthy snacks. Divide the total fat grams listed on the Nutrition Label of the package by 5. This gives the fat content in teaspoons.

The Difference Between Snacks and Treats

You can help parents to understand that there is a big difference between a **snack** and a **treat**.

What is a snack?

Children eat small meals because they have small stomachs. Growing children need **snacks** to meet their daily food needs. Snacks should be chosen from the four food groups of *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. These food groups are:

- Grain products
- Fruits and vegetables
- Milk products
- Meat and alternatives to meat (fish, beans, tofu, etc.)

What is a treat?

A **treat** is a food or drink that is high in sugar or starches. It is often sticky or gooey. Treats should only be served once in awhile or on special occasions. They should not be eaten at each meal or every day. The best time to serve a treat is at mealtime. After eating the treat, the child should brush his or her teeth.

Timing

How often snacks and treats are eaten has a big effect on the development of tooth decay. It is best to eat snacks and treats all at once and not slowly throughout the day. The best time to eat a treat is at mealtime.

You can get a copy of the *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* on the Internet at:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food_guide_rainbow_e.html

or by writing to

Publications Health Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K9



Section 4

Dental Safety

When children are active, accidents can happen. It is important for families to teach children to play safely.

Injuries to the mouth can be serious. If an oral injury happens, the child should go to the dental office right away. Accidents can cause permanent damage. Some injuries to the teeth and mouth are easy to see. Others are not. A dental professional will be able to tell the difference. Getting treatment right away is important to repair a mouth injury or save a tooth that is damaged.

Protecting Children's Smiles

- Teach children to play safely. If possible, children should play in playgrounds with soft surfaces (such as sand or mulch) that provides a cushion when they fall.
- Children must learn not to push each other or play roughly near water fountains and when they are eating. Metal water spouts and utensils such as forks and knives can injure the teeth and mouth.
- Children should wear a mouth guard when they play hockey, soccer or football and when they use rollerblades.
- Approved infant car seats and seatbelts should be used for children. A child who is not in a car seat or seatbelt may be badly hurt in a car accident.
- Children who are starting to walk may not be steady on their feet. They can fall and hit their teeth, or knock them out on coffee tables and other furniture.
- Children who are teething will chew on almost anything. Families must watch children closely to make sure they do not puncture their mouths (with sharp objects) or get splinters in their mouths (from wood). Teeth can also break if a child is chewing on something hard.
- Pacifiers and baby bottle nipples should be checked often for cracks and pieces that have broken off. It's important to buy new pacifiers and nipples often.
- Mouthwash should be kept in a place where children cannot reach. Alcohol found in some mouthwashes can be dangerous for children.
- Toothpaste should be stored in a place where children cannot reach. Toothpaste is made to taste good and small children may try to eat it. A tube of toothpaste has a lot of fluoride in it. Small children may be badly affected by too much fluoride.

Emergency Treatment for a Knocked Out Adult Tooth

When a tooth is knocked out or if someone's mouth was hit hard enough to loosen a tooth, contact a dental professional right away.

If the tooth is clean, it can be put back into the socket (the part of the mouth where the tooth was). If there is dirt on the tooth, gently rinse it with water before putting it back in the hole.

If this cannot be done, put the tooth in a glass of milk. Both the tooth and the child should go to a dental professional right away. Always hold the tooth by the crown (top of the tooth) only.

Try to get help as soon as possible. Only quick action will save the tooth.

Do not put baby teeth back in the socket. If you're not sure whether the tooth is a baby or an adult tooth, take both the child and tooth to a dental professional immediately. The longer it is out of the mouth, the less chance there is to save the tooth.

Any severe blow to the mouth can damage teeth. This needs to be checked by a dental professional right away. Not all damage appears right away, so continue checking the mouth for any changes in the way the tooth and gums look and how the tooth feels to the child.



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