

Instructor's Notes

Lesson: Dental Health

Objectives:

- Present essential concepts about dental health.
- Foster a love for learning by providing hands-on activities.
- Utilize various critical thinking skills related to dental health across the curriculum.
- Improve overall dental health of students and their children.

Subjects: Reading, writing, science, math, social studies and critical thinking

Procedure:

- 1 Read the "*Oral Health*" handout. It includes the history of the toothbrush. Working in teams, have the students use the Internet to find the answers to the "*Dental Trivia*".
- 2 Have the students cut out magazine pictures of people smiling. Discuss the importance of teeth in facial expression. Blacken-out some of the teeth with a crayon or marker to demonstrate how the appearance changes with missing teeth.
- 3 Demonstrate how dental sealants protect chewing surfaces of teeth by completing the "*You're Covered*" experiment.
- 4 Demonstrate the way decay spreads in a tooth by completing the "*Progress of Decay*" activity.
- 5 Disclose invisible plaque. Mix three or four drops of red food color with a few tablespoons of water in a paper cup. Ask a volunteer to swish the colored water around in his/her mouth for ten seconds and carefully spit it out into a second cup or nearby sink. Have the volunteer look in a magnifying mirror and identify the red areas indicating plaque. Ask the volunteer to brush their teeth with toothpaste and a new toothbrush. Then repeat the disclosing procedure. See how much of the plaque is gone and discuss the areas where plaque hides.
- 6 Soda is basically sugar water. All calories in soda are from sugar. Soda has absolutely no nutritional value. There are about 10 tsp. of sugar in a single-serving, 12 oz. can of soda. Have the students measure out 10 teaspoons of sugar in a container in order to visualize how much sugar is in one can of soda. Compare this amount of sugar to other food items. Discuss what sugar does to our teeth.
7. Try two experiments that give a strong visual representation. The first, "*Eggs-periment*" shows how fluoride protects the enamel on teeth. The second shows how easily teeth can be stained.

8. Another experiment, "*A Tooth Test*" shows the importance of brushing your teeth with toothpaste to remove bacteria. There are a list of questions to consider following this experiment to encourage critical thinking and discussion.
9. In activity #1, you read about the history of the toothbrush. Now it's time to consider the history of toothpaste. A short history is included in this packet. It is a great starting point for some geography or history lessons. It also makes you appreciate modern-day toothpaste!