



## Healthy Choices for Healthy Teeth

Grade 3 | Making Healthy Choices

### Learning Goals

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- apply self-awareness while demonstrating an understanding of the importance of good oral health to overall health, and the effects of different food choices on oral health.

### Facility


Classroom


### Equipment List

Board and writing utensil (poster paper, black board, interactive white board)

20 - 30 copies of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide (optional) (1 per student)

 [Teacher Resource 3: Healthy Eating and Living Skills Checklist](#)

 [Student Resource 9: Healthy Snack Attack](#)

 [Student Resource 10: Exit Card: Benefits of Good Oral Health](#)



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### Minds On

Share and clarify lesson Learning Goal in a large-group discussion.

Have students work with an elbow partner to use the Think Pair Share Strategy (see Appendix) to discuss the following questions.

*Teacher prompt: "Why should you avoid sugary foods?" Student response: "I should avoid sugary foods because they can hurt my teeth and lead to tooth or gum problems that can be painful."*

*Teacher prompt: "What types of food should you avoid for the health of your teeth?" Student response: "I should avoid cookies, cakes, candies, foods that have a lot of sugar in them, and sugary sticky foods."*

*Teacher prompt: "It is hard to avoid sugary food all the time, so if you do eat sugary foods, such as candy, raisins, cookies, for the health of your teeth when is the best time to do so: as snacks between meals, with your meals or before bed?" Student response: "With your meals so that you can clean your teeth afterwards."*

*Teacher prompt: "What could you eat instead?" Student response: "Fresh fruit and vegetables."*

Direct students to share their answers, and record their responses on the board.

### A&E - Minds On

Teacher observation with verbal feedback of students' ability to demonstrate knowledge related to healthy choices



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### Action

Lead a large-group discussion on the following prompt.

*Teacher prompt:* “Problems with teeth or gums can be painful, can make it difficult to eat and can affect our appearance. Oral health problems can also contribute to health problems that affect other parts of the body, such as the heart, lungs and digestive system. We can keep our teeth healthy by brushing and flossing and going to the dentist for regular checkups. Being careful about what we eat can also help. It is very important to take good care of your teeth for many reasons.”

Continue leading students through large-group discussion using a brainstorming web with the word plaque in the center circle. As students respond to the following prompts record their responses as ideas branching out from the circle.

*Teacher prompt:* “What do you think plaque is?” *Student response:* “Bacteria left in your mouth from the food you eat.”

*Teacher prompt:* “Plaque is a soft, sticky, colourless layer of bacteria and food debris that is constantly forming on the teeth. Clean teeth feel smooth and slippery. However, if after eating you don’t brush your teeth right away, when you move your tongue across the outside surfaces of your teeth, they will feel ‘rough’ or ‘fuzzy’ and a little sticky in some places. This ‘fuzzy’ feeling is caused by the plaque on your teeth. Try doing this plaque test on your teeth right now. If your teeth feel ‘rough’ or ‘fuzzy,’ what does this mean that you should do?” *Student response:* “If teeth feel fuzzy you should clean your teeth to remove the plaque.”

*Teacher prompt:* “Keeping our teeth clean by brushing and flossing and going to the dentist for regular check-ups also help us to keep our mouth healthy. Being careful about what we eat can also help. What kinds of foods should you limit? What could you eat instead?” *Student response:* “I should limit the amount of sugary foods that I eat, especially those such as sticky popcorn or candy apples that stick to your teeth. I can eat apples without the candy coating, instead. Or a piece of cheese, or vegetables such as carrots or radishes.”

Have students individually complete Student Resource 9: Healthy Snack Attack, responding to the following.

*Teacher prompt:* “What healthy food choices can you make for a healthy recess snack?”



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### A&E - Action

Teacher observation with verbal feedback of students' demonstration of knowledge related to the role different foods play as contributing or preventive factors in a variety of health disorders, and their ability to apply self-awareness skills as they focus and clarify ideas to make healthier food choices, using Teacher Resource 3: Healthy Eating and Living Skills Checklist

Teacher observation with feedback of students' ability to reflect on their own oral hygiene and their ability to identify a strategy that will promote healthy and strong teeth and good eating habits using the Student Resource 9: Healthy Snack Attack

### Consolidation

Hand out Student Resource 10: Exit Card: Benefits of Good Oral Health to each student and ask them to complete it. Explain to students that they need to identify two ways that oral health helps to contribute to their overall health.

Review lesson Learning Goal with the students in a large-class discussion. Instruct students to use the Think Pair Share Strategy (see Appendix) with their elbow partner to explore the following:

- One way that eating healthy food can affect their oral health (e.g., having a diet with lots of dairy can help build strong teeth, cutting back on sugary snacks to prevent tooth decay)
- One way that good oral health can improve their overall health (e.g., brushing their teeth at least two times per day, and flossing their teeth at least one time per day can prevent cavities, tooth decay and gum disease—gum disease can lead to heart disease and digestive problems too)

Review ideas with the class by having pairs share their responses. Record the responses on the board.



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### A&E - Consolidation

Teacher observation with verbal feedback of students' ability to make healthier choices by identifying ways that good oral health can affect their overall health using Teacher Resource 3: Healthy Eating and Living Skills Checklist

Teacher observation with verbal feedback of students' demonstrated knowledge related to making healthy food choices as connected with the lesson Learning Goal using Teacher Resource 3: Healthy Eating and Living Skills Checklist

### Ideas for Extension

Have students create a rap to instruct their peers on what they can do to fight tooth decay.

### Next Steps

Students practise making healthier food choices regarding their oral health and general well-being when faced with choices around substances.

### Notes to Teacher

Copies of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide, including the Resource for Educators, may be downloaded for free at

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/order-commander/index-eng.php#1>, or order individual copies for your class by calling TTY: 1-800-926-9105.

#### Benefits of Oral Health

Optimal oral health is an integral part of total health. Healthy teeth and gums contribute in many ways to our everyday lives. If they are cared for properly, healthy teeth should last a lifetime!

We get two sets of teeth, primary and permanent.



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**Primary Teeth:** The primary teeth consist of 20 teeth: 10 lower teeth and 10 upper teeth. They are important for eating, talking, smiling and self-esteem. The primary teeth also save space for the permanent teeth. When the permanent tooth is ready to erupt, the roots of the primary tooth are absorbed, allowing it to fall out. The permanent tooth then has room to move into the space.

**Permanent Teeth:** The permanent teeth consist of 32 teeth: 16 lower teeth and 16 upper teeth. They are also important for eating, talking, smiling and self-esteem. The first permanent teeth that appear in the mouth are the six-year molars. They come in at the very back of the mouth, usually at five or six years of age. Permanent teeth are meant to last a lifetime.

### Plaque

Plaque is a soft, sticky, colourless layer of bacteria and food debris that is constantly forming on the teeth. It clings to the teeth, especially near the gum line, on the surfaces next to other teeth, and in pits and grooves. Plaque is recognized as the primary cause of the two most common oral diseases, tooth decay and gum disease.

### The Relationship of Plaque to Dental Decay

The most widespread dental disease in children is dental decay. For dental decay to occur there must be plaque, sugar and a susceptible tooth. When food containing sugar is eaten, the plaque bacteria react to form acid. This sticky plaque then holds the acid to the tooth surface, allowing it to attack the tooth. After repeated acid attacks, the surface of the tooth begins to dissolve and a cavity results.

### The Decay Process

Enamel, the hard outer protective covering of the tooth, is broken down by bacterial acid. If left untreated, the decay will spread into the dentin, a slightly softer layer that forms the bulk of the tooth. If still not treated, the decay penetrates to the pulp, the soft centre tissue containing blood vessels and nerve tissue. An abscess may form at the root of the tooth. At this point, if the tooth is not treated by root canal therapy, the tooth may be destroyed.

### Sugar and Tooth Decay

Sugars come in many forms and names (e.g., honey, fructose, sucrose, lactose, glucose, corn syrup, corn sugar, maple sugar, invert sugar, molasses). Whether the sugars are in candy, cookies, milk, fruits, breads or cereals, they can contribute to tooth decay.

When evaluating whether a food is a good snack, be tooth smart! Consider these simple guidelines to help encourage students to make good food choices:

- Discourage the use of sticky, sugary foods between meals. Reserve these foods (such as dried fruit, fruit leathers and sweet, sticky baked goods) for mealtimes or when children can brush their teeth afterwards.
- Avoid daylong nibbling because it provides a steady food supply to acid-producing bacteria.



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- Not all sweets can be totally eliminated but the frequency of intake should be limited.

### Protective Foods

Eating a piece of cheese after a meal or snack may actually protect teeth against cavities. Cheeses such as cheddar, Swiss, blue, Monterrey jack, mozzarella, Brie and Gouda contain ingredients that have been shown to protect teeth from acids and help keep teeth strong.

### Additional Resources

An interactive website children can use to learn more about taking care of their teeth is [http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay\\_healthy/body/teeth.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/body/teeth.html).

Discover Healthy Eating! (2009) A Teacher's Resource for Grades 1 – 8 developed by Toronto Public Health, York Region Health Services and Region of Peel. Download: <http://www.nutritionrc.ca>; click "Web Resources" then click on "Resources from the Field".

Nutrition information from Toronto Public Health <http://www.toronto.ca/health/nutrition/index.htm>.