

# Educator's Teaching Teeth Guidebook

This booklet is intended for Community Health Representatives (CHRs), Children's Oral Health Coordinators (COHCs), and other educators or health care workers who want to teach their community members about oral health.

These "teaching teeth" can be used in a number of settings. Use them in school or day care demonstrations, maternal health and well-baby visits, caregiver and tots groups, or pre-natal nutrition programs (CPNP). The displays can be used in a group or individual setting to best fit the needs of the community.

Additional information is provided as tips and techniques for oral care.

There are two sets of teaching teeth:

- **Mr. Clean Mouth** - Use the teaching teeth to demonstrate how to brush and floss.
- **Baby Bottle Tooth Decay (Early Childhood Tooth Decay)** – Use the display to show what tooth decay looks like and teach how to prevent decay.



# Mr. Clean Mouth



**What it is:** A realistic model of the adult mouth with teeth, gums, and tongue. It comes with a toothbrush.

**How to use it:** Use the model to show how to brush and floss.

**Who to use it with:** This model can be used with any age group.

**When to use it:** Use it in individual or group settings (classrooms, at community health groups such as Caregiver-Tots programs, or one-on-one sessions) to teach proper oral care.

## Resources:

- Dental Health Manual
- You and Your Baby Oral Health and Nutrition Learning Kit

## Demonstration: How to Brush

Explain why brushing your teeth everyday is important for adults and for children. Demonstrate the how to brush by using the mouth model and the toothbrush. Talk about the steps that are not possible to do when using the mouth model, like spitting out extra toothpaste.

### Steps:

- 1) Wet the toothbrush.
- 2) Add a berry-sized amount of toothpaste to the brush.
- 3) Start a two-minute timer.

- 4) Hold the toothbrush at an angle against the teeth.
- 5) Brush in small circles against the teeth.
- 6) Brush all sides of the teeth.
  - Brush on an angle on the outside of the teeth.
  - Brush the inside surface of each tooth.
  - Brush the chewing surfaces or tops of the teeth.
- 7) Brush the tongue.
- 8) Two minutes is done!
- 9) Spit out extra toothpaste.
- 10) Rinse the toothbrush with water. Store the toothbrush in a clean, dry place with the bristles pointing up.

## How Much Toothpaste to Use

- 1) Children over two years old and adults should use a berry-sized amount of toothpaste.
- 2) Use toothpaste with fluoride.

## Demonstration: How to Floss

Show how to floss your teeth properly by using the mouth model and dental floss. Explain that when you floss you are able to clean the sides of the teeth that brushing has missed. You need to brush and floss in order to have a clean and healthy mouth.

### Steps:

- 1) Cut a piece of dental floss about the length of your arm (about 45 cm or 18 inches).
- 2) Wrap the floss around your index fingers so there is about a 2 inch (5 cm) gap of floss between your fingers.
- 3) Gently thread between the teeth until it touches the gums.
- 4) Move the floss back and forth along the side of the tooth, getting all the way into the gum line.
- 5) Use a new section of dental floss for each tooth.
- 6) Repeat for each tooth.

## Key messages:

- 1) Brush for 2 minutes, 2 times a day.
- 2) Floss every day.
- 3) Use a berry-sized amount of toothpaste.
- 4) Make water your main drink.
- 5) Eat healthy.
- 6) Visit a dental care provider once a year.

# Baby Bottle Tooth Decay Display



**What it is:** A four-stage model of baby teeth showing early childhood tooth decay.

**How to use it:** Use the model to show how baby teeth decay and how to spot signs of tooth decay on baby teeth.

**Who to use it with:** Use it with new/expectant caregivers and caregivers with young children (under seven years of age).

**When to use it:** This model can be used in many settings, such as pre-natal nutrition program and Well Baby Visits. It would best complement the educational materials in the "You and Your Baby" Oral Health and Nutrition Learning Kits.

## Resources:

- Dental Health Manual
- "You and Your Baby" Oral Health and Nutrition Learning Kit

## Demonstration: Taking Care of Your Baby's Mouth

Use the model to show what tooth decay on baby teeth looks like. After, explain how to wipe a baby's gums with a washcloth and how to brush a baby's teeth with a toothbrush. Demonstrate using a doll or with a caregiver and baby.

### Steps:

- 1) Have all the supplies ready and nearby – the baby washcloth or the baby toothbrush if your baby has teeth.
- 2) Position your baby so he/she is comfortable and you can easily see into his/her mouth. Try:
  - Holding your baby in a feeding position in your arms.
  - Lay your baby on a change table with an adult helper.
  - Sit with your knees touching an adult helper's knees – the knee-to-knee position. Put baby on the helper's legs and have baby's head in your lap. The adult helper can gently hold baby's arms and legs.
- 3) If your baby does not have teeth, use the soft, clean, damp washcloth to wipe the gums and around the mouth.
- 4) If your baby has teeth, use a baby toothbrush and only water to brush any teeth.

### Key messages:

- 1) Wipe your baby's gums with a soft, clean, damp cloth every day. Brush with a baby toothbrush and only water when you see the first tooth.
- 2) Breastfeeding is best for your baby. If you decide to use a bottle, only fill it with breast milk, infant formula with iron, or, after one year, water. Never put sweet things like juice, pop, or drink crystals in a bottle or sippy cup. These drinks have sugars that will cause tooth decay.
- 3) Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle. If your baby needs a bottle to fall asleep, only put water in it. Water is the only drink that will not cause tooth decay.
- 4) Starting at six months of age, give your baby country foods, iron rich baby cereal, vegetables, and cheese to help keep teeth healthy. Sweet things like pop, jucie and candy can cause tooth decay. Never put pop, juice, or drink crystals in a bottle or sippy cup.
- 5) Visit a dental care provider at least once a year. Your baby's first dental check-up should be before one year of age.

## Additional Information:

### Good Oral Health

It is easy to keep your mouth and your child's mouth clean and healthy:

- Eat healthy.
- Drink water (one year and older).
- Be smoke-free.

### What is Tooth Decay?

Tooth decay is an infection of the teeth. It is also called a cavity. It happens when sugar and germs stay on the teeth for a long time and attack the teeth. Getting rid of these sugars and germs by brushing and flossing is important to prevent tooth decay.

Tooth decay looks like spots, lines, or stains on the teeth that do not brush or wipe off. Look for:

- White lines along the gums
- Brown or black spots on the teeth
- Brown holes on the teeth

Other signs of an unhealthy mouth include:

- Red or swollen gums
- Bleeding when brushing or flossing
- Loose or separating adult teeth

If caregivers notice any of these problems with their child's mouth, they should visit a dental care provider right away. When tooth decay is not treated, it will lead to tooth loss. Adult teeth are not replaced, so they will be lost forever. People who take care of their teeth can have healthy teeth for a lifetime.

### What is Early Childhood Tooth Decay?

Tooth decay on baby teeth happens when baby teeth are not cleaned after your baby eats or drinks. This is called Early Childhood Tooth Decay.

Some causes include:

- Not brushing teeth twice a day.
- Putting baby to bed with a bottle.

- Eating sweet and sticky things – sugary drinks like pop or juice and candies.
- Using a bottle or sippy cup past one year.

## Discussion Questions:

**Question:** What can I do to prevent early childhood tooth decay on my baby's teeth?

**Answer:** Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle. Remember to clean your baby's teeth every day.

### Key Facts:

- Put your baby to bed **without** a bottle. If your baby needs a bottle to fall asleep, only put water in it. Water is the only drink that will not cause tooth decay.
- Breastfeeding is best for your baby.
- If you decide to use a bottle, only fill it with breast milk, infant formula with iron, or, after one year, water. Never put sweet things like juice, pop, or drink crystals in a bottle or sippy cup. These drinks have sugars that will cause tooth decay.
- Stop using a bottle by 12 months of age.
- Soothe your child by holding or gently rocking them. You can also try singing, reading, or rubbing their back.

**Question:** Do I need to clean my baby's mouth even if she/he does not have teeth yet?

**Answer:** Yes. Wipe your baby's gums with a soft, clean, damp cloth every day to keep gums and mouth healthy.

### Key Facts:

- Use a soft, clean, damp cloth to wipe your baby's mouth and gums every day.
- Only use the cloth for cleaning your baby's mouth. To stop the spread of germs, do not use the cloth for anything else. Keep the cloth clean by washing it after each use.
- Clean your baby's mouth every day. Your baby will get used to oral care at an early age. It will make good brushing habits easier to keep.

**Question:** When should I start brushing my baby's teeth?

**Answer:** As soon as you see a tooth.

**Key Facts:**

- Use a baby toothbrush and only water to brush your baby's teeth every day.
- Brushing every day helps prevent tooth decay on baby teeth.
- Baby teeth are needed to hold a place for adult teeth. They help the mouth grow properly and make sure adult teeth have enough space to come in straight.
- Young children with poor oral health can have trouble eating, sleeping, talking, and learning. They may also have low body weight and get sick often.
- If baby teeth decay, there are often serious problems. Tooth decay on baby teeth is very painful.
- Be a good role model. Show your child how to take care of their teeth by brushing your own teeth twice a day.

**Question:** How do I check for tooth decay on my child's teeth?

**Answer:** Lift your child's lip every day. Check teeth for lines or spots.

**Key Facts:**

- Healthy teeth have no lines or spots.
- Lines, spots, or stains on the teeth can mean tooth decay.
- Take your child to a dental care provider if you see any signs of tooth decay.
- Lifting your child's lip to look at their teeth every day helps you to check for any changes to their teeth.
- The beginning stages of tooth decay can sometimes be reversed if they are caught early. A dental care provider will be able to help.

For babies (birth to 23 months):

- Wipe your baby's gums with a soft, clean, damp cloth every day. Use a baby toothbrush with only water when you see the first tooth.

For children (2 years and up):

- Brush two times a day, in the morning and before bed. Use a small toothbrush with toothpaste. Brush for two minutes every time. Floss once a day.