

# Lesson 2: Brushing, Flossing, and Tooth Decay

## Overview:

Students will learn how to take the best care of their teeth and why that's so important!

## Time Needed:

45 minutes




## Supplies:

- Brushing, Flossing, and Tooth Decay Video
- *Toothless Toss*
  - » Room to gather students in a circle
  - » A soft, medium-sized ball
- [Play Dough Mouth](#) Activity Sheet
  - » Play dough
  - » Egg cartons cut in half or an ice cube tray
  - » String

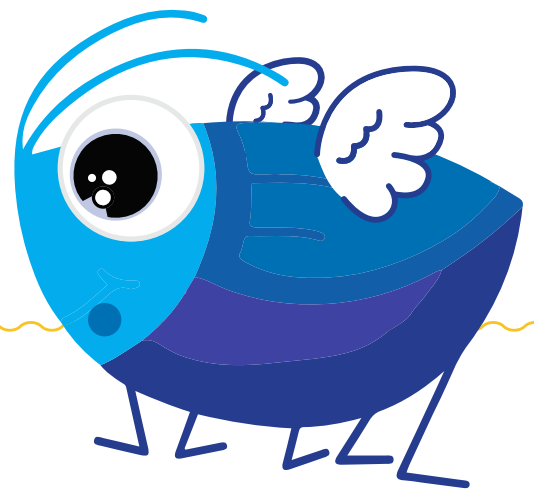
## Review:

"Are You Smarter Than a Sugar Bug?"

Briefly review key points from Lesson 1 with your students.

1. When our teeth first grow in, these are called our **primary teeth**. Sometimes we call them our baby teeth!
2. **Incisors**  - are the teeth in front of our mouth. These teeth are sharp and flat to help us take bites of our food and cut it into smaller pieces.
3. **Cuspids**, or **canines**,  - are the teeth in the corners of our mouth. These teeth are sharp and pointy and work well to hold onto or tear apart food.
4. **Molars**  - are the teeth in the back of our mouth. Molars have big, flat tops called chewing surfaces that we use to crush and grind our food into small enough pieces to swallow.

Indiana Standards:  
(K-2: 1.1, 1.5, 3.2, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1)  
National Health  
Education Standards:  
(1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.5, 1.2.6, 1.2.7, 2.2.1, 2.2.4, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 3.2.5, 4.2.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3, 5.2.4, 5.2.5, 5.2.6, 7.2.1, 7.2.2, 7.2.3)



## Introduction:

Ask students how they use their teeth. Examples include:

Eating

Talking

Singing

Chewing

Biting

Explain that we use our teeth to chew our food into bite-sized pieces. Without our teeth, we could not chew crunchy healthy foods like carrots and apples. Teeth help us talk and say words like 'tooth.' We need our teeth so we can make sounds like 'th' and share our ideas. We also use our teeth to smile and show the world how we are feeling. Whether we are happy, sad, laughing, or crying, our teeth help show how we feel.

Now that we know why our teeth are so important, let's learn how to keep them healthy!

## Steps:

Explain what plaque is and how it affects the teeth.

1. Plaque is the sticky, fuzzy stuff on teeth that's made of tiny germs that live in our mouth, called bacteria, and causes tooth decay. Plaque forms when bacteria inside our mouth gets hungry.
2. The bacteria, or germs, in our mouth eat the left over food that stays on and in between our teeth when we snack or eat a meal. Those germs mix with the left over foods, and create a soft, fuzzy, plaque mixture that sticks to our teeth.
3. When bacteria eat leftover food in our mouth, it makes an acid that can hurt our teeth. This acid attacks our teeth when we eat and drink. Even though the hard outside layer of teeth, called **enamel**, is like a strong shield, acid can cause tiny holes called cavities.
4. Plaque spreads all over the enamel, or the shield, of our teeth, but it can be hard to see! Plaque is very good at hiding because it is close to the color of our teeth: white or yellow.
5. When plaque is left on teeth for more than 24 hours, or one day, it can get too hard to clean off with a toothbrush or floss. It can turn white, brown, or black. Plaque that hardens attracts more germs.
6. Don't worry! When we clean our teeth, in the morning and at night, we brush and floss to get rid of the plaque!

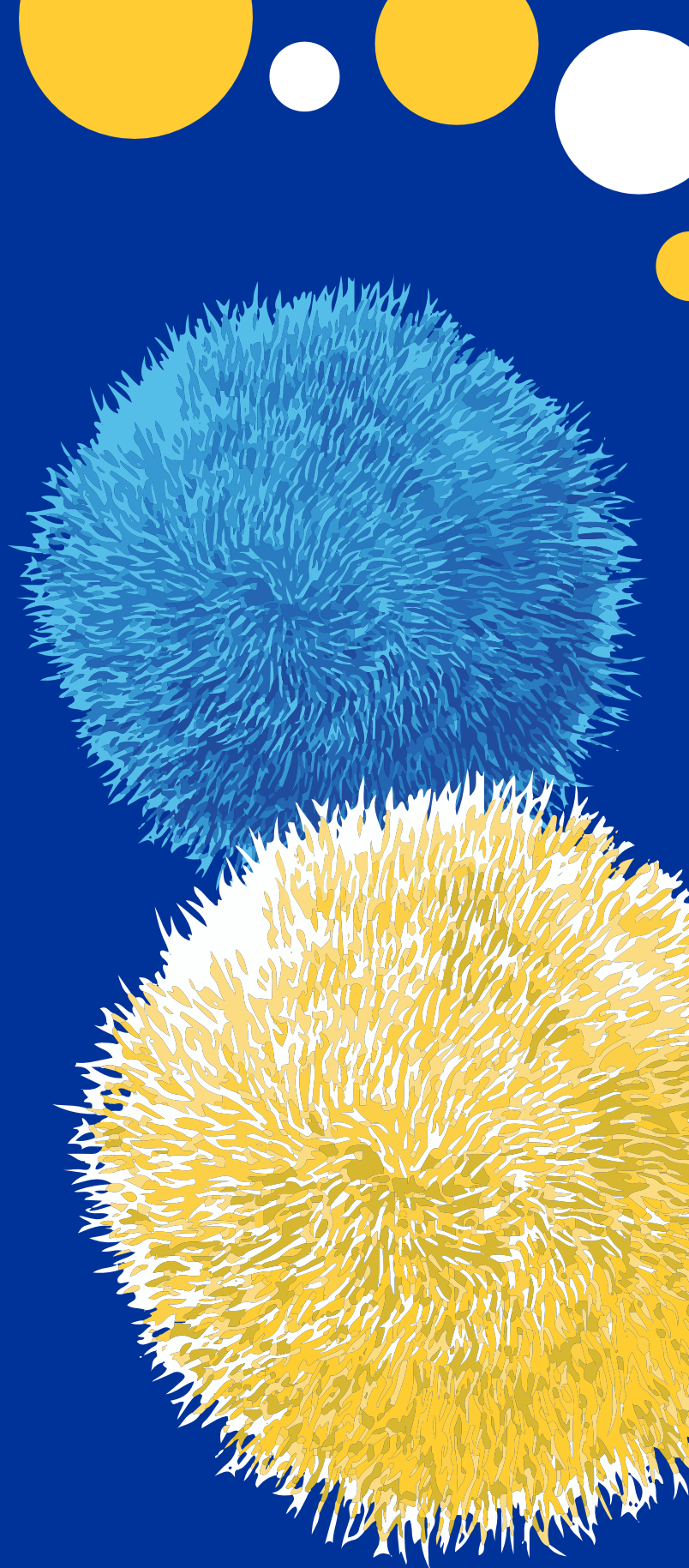


## Activity Time

Gather students in a large circle for the *Toothless Toss* activity.

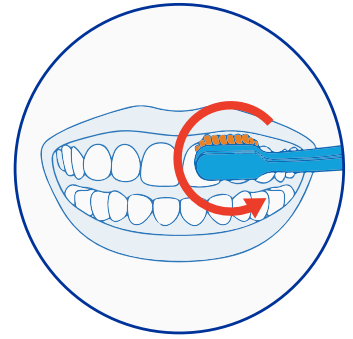
1. Explain the rules of the game:
  - a. Game play starts when the ball is thrown to a student.
  - b. Allow the person who threw the ball to ask the catcher a question of their choice. Some suggestions might be: *What is your favorite color? When is your birthday? Do you like cats or dogs?*
  - c. The catcher must answer the question without using their teeth to speak. *(Show students how to put their lips over their teeth to talk)*
  - d. The catcher throws the ball to a new person and asks the same question.
2. Encourage students to be silly and creative with this game.
3. After the activity, ask your students:
  - a. How would everyone feel to talk without teeth every day? *(sad, it would be weird or hard)*
  - b. How did it feel when your classmates didn't know what you were saying? *(sad, frustrating, etc.)*
  - c. Did you have to change any of your answers to be understood? *(yes, no)*
  - d. Can anyone name a reason why someone might not be able to use their teeth? *(Lost teeth, toothache, etc.)*

**WATCH NOW:**  
Brushing, Flossing,  
and Tooth Decay



### Share the basics of toothbrushing and flossing with your students:

1. To keep our teeth healthy, we must brush them once in the morning and once in the evening before going to sleep. We should brush for two minutes each time so the plaque cannot hang out on our teeth while we are at school or sleeping. You can sing the 'Baby Shark' song two times while brushing your teeth to make sure you get to two minutes!
2. We should brush our teeth with a soft-bristled toothbrush. We can brush our teeth in any direction, as long as we brush the front, back, and side of each tooth. Don't forget to brush your tongue, too!
3. You should brush up to your gums. Place your toothbrush up against your gums to clean any stuck food or germs that harm your teeth. Brush gently, not too hard. Scrubbing can hurt your gums and teeth.
4. Use toothpaste with fluoride in it. Fluoride is a mineral that protects our teeth from cavities. Fluoride toothpaste helps to keep our enamel strong. Fluoride is great for our teeth but try not to swallow it! Swallowing too much fluoride toothpaste can make us sick. We don't need too much, a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste is enough. We can also get fluoride from drinking water that has fluoride added into it, like tap water.
5. Before brushing at night, use floss to clean out any plaque that could be hiding between each tooth. Use a floss pick or a string floss to scrape clean the sides of your teeth that touch together. Then, brush your teeth to remove the plaque just like before.
6. We can tell when all the plaque is gone because our teeth will feel smooth, instead of sticky or fuzzy, after brushing.
7. If we see any white, brown, or black spots on the white of our teeth while brushing, they could be signs of cavities. Cavities can only be fixed by a dentist. So, if we notice any spots on our teeth, we should tell an adult. When we tell an adult, they can make sure we get to our dentist so we can get them fixed!



Now that everyone knows why and how to take care of their teeth, let's practice! Have students complete the [Play Dough Mouth](#) activity.

### Next Steps:

Continue discussing the importance of healthy oral hygiene habits. Your students will learn more about the best way to protect their mouth over the next few lessons!

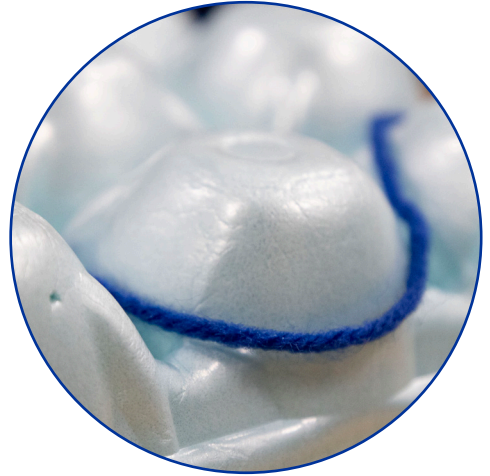
# Play Dough Mouth

## Overview:

Students will get hands-on practice of how to floss and why.

## Supplies:

- Play dough
- Egg carton cut in half or an ice cube tray (see below)
- Yarn



## Steps:

1. Give each student an egg carton that has been cut in half and sliced by row to resemble one row of teeth, one container of play dough, and one long piece of yarn to resemble floss.
2. Explain to students how the activity works:
  - a. First, flip your egg carton upside down so you do not see the egg openings.
  - b. Open your carton and stick pieces of play dough between the slots of your egg carton teeth.
  - c. Use your piece of yarn as floss to slide between the egg carton teeth. Curve your "floss" in a "C" shape around each "tooth" as you go.
  - d. Clean out the spaces between your "teeth" by removing play dough pieces with your "floss".
3. Explain to students how this is like flossing:
  - a. Play dough is like plaque that sticks between our teeth after we eat.
  - b. Flossing helps us clean plaque away and protect our enamel.  
Enamel is the hard outer layer of your tooth.
  - c. Play dough is like plaque because if you don't clean it away when it's soft and sticky, it hardens and gets difficult to remove.

