

Oral Health Activities

Here are some activity ideas to capture and keep your students interested and involved in learning about oral health.

Expose "Invisible" Plaque

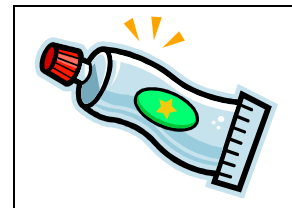


What you will need:

- Food Color (preferably red or blue)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water
- Paper/Styrofoam cups
- Magnifying mirror
- Toothbrushes (enough for entire class)
- Toothpaste

Mix four drops of food color with water in a cup. Ask a volunteer to swish the colored water around in her/his 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 colored areas indicating plaque. Ask the volunteer to brush her/his teeth with toothpaste. Then repeat the disclosing procedure. See how much of the plaque is gone and discuss the areas where plaque hides.

Homemade Toothpaste



Materials:

- 4 teaspoons baking soda (whitener)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt (antiseptic/abrasive)
- 3 teaspoons glycerin (base) available at health food or drugstores $\frac{1}{4}$ to
- 1 teaspoon flavoring (vanilla, almond, peppermint or other extract)
- A small spoon for mixing

Mix all the ingredients thoroughly. Adjust the quantity of glycerin to get toothpaste consistency. Store in a container.

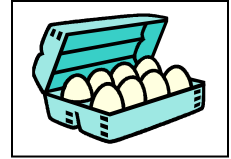
**if needed, you can add sugar substitute (like Splenda) to add sweetness*

Staining of Teeth

This activity emphasizes the importance of good brushing habits as well as how easily teeth can stain.

Materials needed:

- several hardboiled eggs (enough for small groups to share)
- several cans of dark soda
- water
- several clear cups
- several toothbrushes
- toothpaste



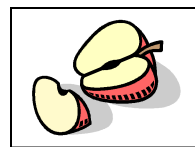
1. Ask students why they think brushing their teeth is important.
2. Explain to students that the hardboiled eggs represent their teeth right now—nice and white. Tell them that the dark soda represents things that are unhealthy for their teeth.
3. Have students work in pairs or small groups. Give each group a small cup of dark soda and a cup filled with water. Tell them to drop one egg into the soda cup and another egg into the cup of water. Ask them to predict what will happen to the egg if it is left in the cup of soda and the cup of water.
4. Observe what has happened to the eggs after *one* or *two* days. Then give each group of students a toothbrush and ask them to gently brush their egg (tooth). What happens to the “soda” egg after brushing? What about the egg left in water?

Progress of Decay

The purpose of this activity is to illustrate the way decay spreads in a tooth.

Materials needed:

- An apple
- A brown paper bag
- A knife



Take the apple and make a one-inch deep hole in it. Place the apple in the paper bag and set it aside for *two* to *three* weeks (out of direct sunlight). Before removing the apple from the bag, discuss the predictions made by the students. Next, slice the apple in half through the hole. Let students observe and discuss how the brown area spreads out as it reaches the center of the apple. This shows how decay spreads through a tooth. Explain why brushing effectively twice a day is important.