



Lesson Plan for Grades 3 – 6

The focus is brushing and snacks and drink choices. Students should understand how sugar helps to create a cavity and the food and drinks that contain high amounts of sugar.

Program timing: **(You'll need a sugar kit for this lesson)**

10 minutes – why teeth, brushing and flossing

15 minutes – sugar

5 minutes – dentist and mouth guards

Sample Program

1. Explain how everyone is losing baby teeth now – getting permanent teeth. What does permanent mean? (lasts forever, not supposed to go away)
2. Talk about the importance of taking care of your teeth - - it revolves around three things, brushing/flossing, healthy food and drinks and regular visits to the dentist.
3. First, talk about care. Why do we need to take care of our teeth? To avoid cavities. Explain how plaque is a germ in your mouth; it's always forming on your teeth. When you eat something sugary, the sugar is an acid that mixes with the plaque to form cavities or a hole. Brushing your teeth gets rid of plaque. Plaque comes from what we eat and drink – especially things with sugar. More on that later!
4. Everyone should be brushing at least twice a day for two minutes. Focus on “how” to brush; stress the amount of time too. Reach far back into the mouth and brush the tongue. When you brush the outside of the top teeth – turn the brush up to a 45-degree angle and make small circles. When you brush the bottom teeth, turn the brush down to a 45 degree angle and make small circles. You have to brush the tops and bottoms of the teeth – in the back and the tongue.
5. Flossing - - children this age need to be flossing. Explain how the toothbrush gets food that's on the outside of the teeth; but often food can get trapped on the inside. That can easily form a cavity. That's why floss is important, it helps dislodge the food in between teeth.
6. Sugar– this is the focus of the program. Remind students that sugar causes cavities. Most people associate sugar with what? Candy! But for most of us, we create problems not as much by candy but by snacks and drinks! Many of the things we choose are high in sugar. Do you brush your teeth after a snack? Probably not. Sugar attacks your teeth in 20 minutes to form a cavity.

7. Explain how students will calculate the amount of sugar in their favorite items. Write this formula on the board: **1 teaspoon of sugar = 4 grams**. Explain that it's important to remember that number.
8. Hold up a product from the sugar kit. Ask "where could you find the amount of sugar in this item?" (on the nutrition label). Have a student find the amount of sugar in an item you provide. Perhaps write it on the board – then have the class help determine the amount of teaspoons of sugar is in it Use the pre-filled tubes to illustrate the amount.
9. It's important to stress the differences between food and drink choices. Use the test tubes to compare the amount of sugar with Cheerios and milk and Honey Nut Cheerios and milk. Or look at Pop Tart and CapriSun vs. Pop Tart and water. We want students to understand that simple changes in what they eat can have a huge impact on their dental health and overall health.

Take a moment to talk about soft drinks. These are "extra special occasion treats" for kids. Not something you should drink every day.

Show again how much is in one (12 oz) bottle of soda. What if you had a bottle of soda every day for a week? How much sugar would that be?

If you drink one bottle of soda each day for a week, it's 80.5 teaspoons of sugar and that's over 1 ½ cups of sugar!

What if you drink one 24-ounce soda each day? This 24-ounce soda contains 23 teaspoons of sugar. If you drink one 24-ounce soda each day for a week, that's 161 teaspoons. There are 48 teaspoons in a cup so that's 3 cups and 17 teaspoons of sugar each week, just from one 24-ounce soda a day. It's more sugar than the 24-ounce bottle can contain (3 cups).

Note: 4 grams = 1 teaspoon 48 teaspoons = 1 cup

10. Things to point out:
 - a. Stress to the class that you're not telling them to never eat or drink sweet things. But it can't be what you always choose
 - b. If you have a sweet snack, water is a good choice. The water from a water company contains fluoride – that helps protect your teeth. Water also can wash away some of the sugar in your mouth.
 - c. Sticky snacks – gummies, fruit roll-ups. Dentists say these are the worst snacks for your teeth. Why? The food sticks to your teeth and remember, sugar attacks in 20 minutes.

What's a good snack choice? Water, milk or real juice; fresh fruit and vegetables; peanut butter; sunflower seeds; cheese and crackers; peanuts; popcorn and pretzels. Yogurt is good – but watch the sugar.

11. Ask what a dentist does. Relate a dentist to a doctor – just like the doctor checks your heart and lungs, a dentist checks your teeth, mouth and gums. That's why many of you are getting a check-up today by a dentist.