

## Teeth and teeth care

### Why do we have teeth?

- Teeth bite and chew food so that it is small enough to be swallowed.
- Teeth help you to form words so that you can speak properly. You will have noticed that when young kids lose their front teeth, their voices sound quite different.

### How many teeth do you have?

Your first teeth are called \_\_\_\_\_ teeth. They may also be called milk teeth, baby teeth or primary teeth.

- You have 20 deciduous teeth and they start growing into your mouth from about 6 months of age.
- All 20 teeth have grown into your mouth by about two and a half years of age.
- From about 6 years of age until 12 years of age you start to lose them.

Your second teeth are called \_\_\_\_\_ teeth (also called adult teeth).

- You have 32 permanent teeth.
- They are called permanent teeth because if you look after them you can have them for all of your life.
- They begin growing through your gums from about 6 years and all 32 have finished growing into your mouth by about 18 –25 years.
- The permanent teeth push out your deciduous teeth as they grow into your mouth.

### What does a tooth look like?

Teeth have two parts:

The \_\_\_\_\_ is the part of the tooth we can see in our mouths.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the tooth is 'planted' into the jawbone to keep the tooth steady while it is doing its job.

Teeth have three layers:

\_\_\_\_\_, a hard protective outer layer covering the crown of the tooth.

- \_\_\_\_\_, a second protective layer covering the nerve of the tooth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (also called the nerve), the soft middle of the tooth that has a blood supply and nerve endings.

### Why do teeth have different shapes?

Different teeth do different jobs.

\_\_\_\_\_ are for cutting.

\_\_\_\_\_ are for tearing.

\_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_ grind up food until it's small enough to swallow

### Looking after your teeth, gums and mouth

It is important to look after your first teeth and permanent teeth. Keeping your teeth, gums and mouth clean and healthy can prevent disease and infection, and can help to avoid pain and sickness. Also a clean healthy mouth feels nice, looks good and keeps your breath fresh.

Your teeth need to be cleaned really well every day. This is because germs or bacteria in your mouth grow on your teeth and around the gums every day. It is called \_\_\_\_\_ and it makes acids that attack the teeth and gums and cause disease.

If you keep your teeth clean and healthy, you will avoid problems like tooth decay, toothache, bleeding gums, yellow teeth and bad breath.

### Tips for a healthy mouth, teeth and gums:

- Clean your teeth well twice a day, after breakfast and last thing before you go to sleep at night. After a meal have a drink of water (this washes your teeth and mouth).
- Use a small toothbrush with *soft* bristles. Hard and medium bristled toothbrushes can damage teeth and gums.
- Use fluoride toothpaste. Spit it out when you have finished cleaning your teeth. Rinsing your mouth will wash out too much of the protective fluoride. 'Spit, don't rinse'.
- Gently and thoroughly brush each side of every tooth and the gums. It should take about 3 minutes to do them all.
- Avoid cleaning your teeth soon after drinking acid drinks such as orange juice. The acid in drinks softens the enamel, and cleaning can scratch the enamel while it is soft. Rinse your mouth with water, wait for about half an hour, then clean your teeth.
- Dental floss cleans between your teeth, but should only be used if you have been shown how to floss by the dentist.
- Once a week you can check your toothbrushing skills by rinsing with a liquid called Disclo-gel\*. This is a pink liquid that stains the plaque pink and makes it easier to see. Disclo-gel\* can be bought from a chemist. If your teeth are not totally clean, there will be a pink stain on a tooth. Brush that stain off and remember how you did it, so that you can add that to how you clean your teeth.
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet and before using your toothbrush.
- Don't start smoking. It stains your teeth and can lead to disease in the mouth.

### Keeping your toothbrush safe from germs

- After brushing, \_\_\_\_\_ your toothbrush under running water.
- Store your \_\_\_\_\_ in a clean dry place.
- Do not share a toothbrush, as this can spread germs.
- Replace your toothbrush often.

### How do teeth decay?

- Germs (bacteria) in our mouth grow on teeth every day. They form a sticky layer over the teeth called dental plaque. The bacteria in plaque use sugars in the things we drink and eat, and make acids. The acid attacks the tooth's outer layers (enamel and dentine) and eats them away.
- If acid continues to attack, then a hole will appear in the tooth's outer layer. This is called **tooth** \_\_\_\_\_ (or dental caries). Tooth decay may be painful or you may not even know it is there.
- Saliva neutralises the acid in plaque. If the plaque is brushed off and saliva surrounds the tooth, the enamel surface can harden again. Fluoride helps the enamel to be repaired.

If the tooth continues to decay, a number of things could happen:

- The tooth could break.
- The nerve or pulp could get infected and the nerve could die.
- You could have a toothache.
- You could get facial swelling.
- You might feel sick.
- You might need a filling.
- The tooth might need to be taken out (this does not need to happen often now).

