

## Children's Oral Health/Lesson Plan

**Goal:** WIC participants will understand the importance of oral health in children and know how to care for their children's teeth.

**Objectives:** WIC participants will be able to:

- A. State why baby teeth are important.
- B. Perform a lift the lip exam on a child.
- C. Identify how to prevent tooth decay in children.

**Introduce yourself. Ask if anyone knows why baby teeth (also known as primary teeth) are important.**

### **I. Why are baby teeth important?**

Key Points:

- A. They help a child learn how to speak properly.
- B. Baby teeth help to build a child's self esteem.
- C. Baby teeth make sure that there is enough room for permanent teeth to come in.
- D. Baby teeth are important for feeding and good nutrition in children.
- E. Tooth decay can cause infection, poor nutrition, poor weight gain and early loss of baby teeth that could damage permanent teeth.

### **II. What do I need to know in the beginning?**

Key Points:

- A. Before your baby is born, they have twenty primary teeth below the gums that develop in the fourth month of pregnancy.
- B. At about six months, your baby's teeth will begin to push through their gums.
  - a. It is common for babies to drool and cry more when their teeth begin to come in.

### **III. Ask: How can I prevent tooth decay in my infant or toddler?**

Key Points:

- A. Starting the first few days after birth, take a wet cloth and wipe it over your baby's gums after each feeding.
- B. Never give your baby a pacifier dipped in soda or other sugar filled drinks.
- C. Frequent consumption of foods high in sugar (for example, candy, cookies, sweetened beverages, fruit juice) greatly increase the risk of developing tooth decay.
- D. If you must put your baby to bed with a bottle, make sure it is filled only with water.
  - b. Babies who fall asleep with milk or juices tend to develop baby bottle tooth decay – decay that forms when children are allowed to drink sugary liquids throughout the day and night from a bottle.
- C. Use a cotton swab or small toothbrush to clean the baby's teeth daily to remove plaque.
- D. Once a month, perform a lift the lip exam on your child to check for decay.
  - a. Have your child sit on the floor and look up at you. Lift their lip and check the front and back of the top and bottom teeth. Look for white spots and/or dark stains on your child's teeth. White spots on teeth can be a sign of early tooth decay or cavities and dark stains may indicate current tooth decay. If you see any spots or stains, take your child to see a dentist. In addition, make sure you brush your child's teeth each day using a very small smear of toothpaste with fluoride on a small, soft toothbrush.
- E. Avoid sharing silverware or chewing food for your baby.

- a. Bacteria that live in your mouth can cause tooth decay in your baby's mouth.
- F. Promote breastfeeding rather than feeding with infant formula.
  - a. If using formula, "ready-to-feed" formula is preferred over formula mixed with water containing fluoride during the first year of life to help ensure that infants do not exceed the optimal amount of fluoride intake.
  - b. If using powdered or liquid concentrate infant formula, it should be mixed with water that is fluoride-free or contains low levels of fluoride to reduce the risk of fluorosis.
- G. Use a sippy cup only as a temporary transition between a bottle and a regular cup. Just like a bottle, a sippy cup should never contain juice or other sugary liquids.
- H. Tooth decay is an infectious disease! To avoid transmitting to your child the germs or bacteria that cause tooth decay, keep dental plaque off of your teeth by brushing with a fluoridated toothpaste and flossing.
  - a. Dental plaque is made up of the germs or bacteria that cause tooth decay.

#### **IV. Ask: How can I prevent tooth decay in my school-aged child?**

Key Points:

- A. Toothbrushing at least two times a day using toothpaste with fluoride.
- B. Until your child is 6 or 7, you or another adult should help your child in brushing and flossing their teeth.
- C. Once a child has two teeth touching each other, it is important to begin flossing the child's teeth once a day.
  - a. Parents should floss their child's teeth until the child is approximately 9 years old.
- D. Only use a smear sized amount of toothpaste with fluoride on your child's toothbrush.
  - a. Make sure they spit the toothpaste out instead of swallowing it.
- E. Give your child juice only at mealtimes and not throughout the day.
- F. Ask your dentist about sealants.
  - a. Sealants are protective plastic coatings that prevent food from settling into the grooves of the teeth and causing decay.
- G. Giving your child healthy meals and snacks and teaching them healthy habits.

#### **V. Ask: What else do I need to know?**

Key Points:

- A. Remember these equations:  
 Plaque + Sugar = Acid  
 Acid + Healthy tooth + No Fluoride = Decay (cavities)
- B. It is important to brush and floss everyday because there are serious consequences from not taking care of your teeth.
  - a. These consequences include: Bad breath, tooth decay, tooth loss, pain, infection, and gum disease.
- C. Make brushing fun for your children. Be enthusiastic, it is contagious.
- E. Remember to be a good example for your child because they learn their good dental habits from you.

#### **Activity Suggestions:**

For children, read the story of the three friends.

If time permits, go over “When will my tooth fall out” to talk about different types of teeth and what to expect when losing baby teeth.

Have participants pair up and have one participant put their hands and fingers together. Give the other participant string or yarn and have them practice flossing having the fingers represent teeth.

Take a teaspoon of sugar, a packet of unsweetened gelatin, and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of water to mix. Pour gelatin into two clean, shallow containers with covers and allow cooling. Scrape between teeth with a toothpick to remove food and plaque and place toothpick in one dish. Cover, label and leave in a dark warm place. After 3-5 days, bacterial growth should appear on the dish with the toothpick.

**Evaluation Plan: Evaluation will be based on verbal responses from WIC participants. If the group consists of 8 participants ask at least 2 people to answer one of the following questions below. Note: If the group is larger or smaller than 8 participants, roughly ask 25% of the group.**

- What should you put in your baby’s bottle or sippy cup?
- When do you start cleaning your baby’s teeth?
- When should you first take your child to the dentist?

## *How to Get and Keep a Healthy Grin*

### **Why Baby Teeth (primary teeth) Are Important:**



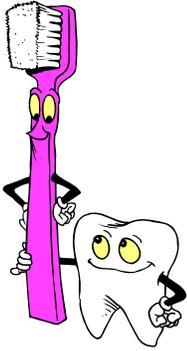
- Chewing food
- Speaking
- Appearance
- Healthy Baby Teeth = Healthy Adult Teeth
- Hold Space for Adult (Permanent) Teeth
- Healthy!!

### **Early Childhood Caries (ECC):**

- Early Childhood Caries are cavities in very young children.
- They are caused by;
  - Too much sugary food and drink
  - Poor oral hygiene
  - Lack of enough fluoride.



## How to Prevent Early Childhood Caries:



- After feeding, wipe your baby's gums with clean gauze pad.
- Begin brushing your child's teeth when the first tooth erupts.
  - If you notice white spots and/or dark stains on your child's teeth, use a very small smear of toothpaste with fluoride on a small, soft toothbrush.
- Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle, especially if its filled with milk or another sugary liquid
- Avoid sippy cup use, especially if its filled with milk or another sugary liquid
- Don't dip pacifier in sweet liquids.
- Allow sugary liquids only at mealtimes.
- Keep your mouth clean and healthy.

## KID'n Around Page

Here are some important items related to good oral health. Have your child identify these items.

