

# Good Nutrition for Good Dental Health/Lesson Plan

**Goal:** WIC participants will understand the impact of food on oral health and will be able to select nutritious foods that are good for teeth.

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

- A. Identify nutritious foods that promote dental health.
- B. Choose a variety of foods that are good for teeth.
- C. Identify the food groups and their place in the food pyramid.
- D. Discuss the importance of dental nutrition.

**Introduce yourself. What are healthy foods?**

## **I. Ask: How much of each healthy food should we eat each day?**

Key Points:

- A. Eat a balanced diet. Eating healthy food will help us have energy and healthy bodies.
- B. It is important to eat foods from all of the following groups
  - Grains: 6 ounces
  - Vegetables: 2.5 cups
  - Fruits: 2 cups
  - Milk: 3 cups
  - Meats/Beans: 5.5 ounces
  - Extras: oils and fats use sparingly
- C. A balanced diet is very important in helping to prevent cavities.
  - Cavities are a result of what we eat and how often those foods are eaten
  - They are also a result of not taking good care of your teeth.

**Activity:**

Read each statement and ask participants if it is true or false.

1. The average American will consume approximately his or her own body weight in sugar in one year. **TRUE**
2. Eating apples, celery, and carrots does not remove plaque. **FALSE**
3. The longer the sugar stays in the mouth and the more frequently sweets are eaten, the more chance cavities have to form. **TRUE**
4. Brushing your teeth immediately after eating sweets does not help prevent cavities. **FALSE**
5. Sweets are less harmful to teeth if eaten with a main meal, rather than between meals. **TRUE**
6. Natural sugars such as honey, molasses, corn sweetener, and raw sugar have the same cavity producing effects as refined sugar. **TRUE**
7. Table sugar is more harmful to teeth than sugars that occur naturally in fruits and milk. **TRUE**

## **II. Ask, How does food cause tooth decay?**

Key Points:

- A. Pieces of food get trapped in the tooth surface when we eat.
- B. When foods such as bread, cereals, pasta, crackers, and potato chips stay in the mouth for long periods of time.
  - If we do not brush and the food stays on our teeth, the bacteria that live in our mouth breaks the food into sugars.

- C. These sugars are converted into acids that eat away at the tooth enamel.
  - Enamel is the protective outer coating of the tooth.
- D. If you snack a lot, food is left on the teeth longer and increases your risk of tooth decay (cavities).
- E. For these reasons, sugars and starches should be eaten during mealtimes when there is a higher level of saliva (spit) production to help prevent cavities.
  - Foods that produce cavities include cake, candy, cookies, cough drops, doughnuts, gum, honey, jams, jellies, mints, molasses, pies, popsicles, soft drinks, syrup, and table sugar.

### **Suggested Activities**

1. Have participants use foods from the basic food groups to plan a day's worth of meals for their families.
2. Have participants watch the hidden sugar demonstration attached to this lesson.
3. Ask participants to name a food with hidden sugar that they have eaten in the last 24 hours. Then ask them to substitute a nutritious snack in its place.
4. Use a table knife to cut an apple. Then use the same knife to cut a marshmallow. In this case, the knife represents the tooth. Ask the participants to notice how the marshmallow sticks to the tooth. When sticky foods are eaten, and teeth are not brushed, it causes more risk for tooth decay.

#### **For Adults and Children:**

1. Dental Bingo game. Create cards using magazine pictures of foods and cardboard. Give clues for each such as: mark a food in the vegetable group. Be creative.

#### **For Children:**

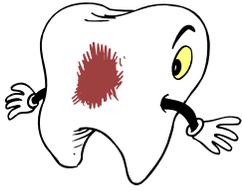
1. Read the Happy tooth and Sad tooth story.
2. Cover any size play blocks with magazine pictures of nutritious foods and use foods with added sugars as well. Let children choose a block and talk about whether the food is both nutritious and dentally good for the teeth. If so, have them use the block to build a strong tower.

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

- What are cavities?
- What types of food can cause cavities?
- Name a tooth-friendly snack.

# Fun Foods for Your Teeth

## Food and Tooth Decay:



- Plaque is a sticky substance that forms on your teeth after eating.
- Decay and gum disease are caused by plaque.
- Plaque irritates the gums and can make them red and swollen.
- The germs in plaque make acids that destroy tooth surfaces.

## Foods That Can Cause Tooth Decay:

- Candy
- Mints
- Sticky foods like caramels or jellybeans
- Sugary drinks (soda, sweet tea, sweetened juices)
- Fruit juice



## Ways to avoid Tooth Decay:

- Limit the amount of decay causing food eaten.
- Brush your teeth using toothpaste with fluoride after every meal.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

## Fun and Nutritious Foods:



Fruits  
Berries  
Carrots  
Nuts  
Tomatoes  
Yogurt  
Chicken  
Eggs  
Melons  
Turkey  
Salad  
Pineapple

Cereal  
Pears  
Sunflower seeds  
Oranges  
Pizza  
Popcorn  
Tacos  
Cheese  
Celery  
Sugar free gum/soda  
Pumpkin seeds



**Remember the next time you reach for a snack, pick a food that is low in sugar and low in fat. Your teeth and body will thank you.**

## KID'n Around Page

Here are some foods that are important for good dental health. Have your child name these foods.

