

Braces

Say: *bray-sez*

If your teeth aren't straight, you can go to an orthodontist (a special kind of dentist) to get braces. Braces go on or around your teeth to move them and straighten them. Some braces are metal, some are plastic, and some are ceramic (strong stuff, sort of like what some dishes are made of). Braces may sound different and scary. Don't worry, because if you need them, they'll only be on your teeth for a year or two.

Canine Teeth

Say: *kay-nine teeth*

(Also called cuspid) - Woof, woof, what's that tooth? Your canine teeth are the pointy ones next to your front teeth. You have two on top and two on the bottom. They're sharp, so they help tear food. This type of tooth is used to hold and tear food. Adults have 4 canine teeth (2 in the top jaw and 2 in the bottom jaw). Canine means, "of or like a dog." Grrrr!

Caries (Cavities)

Say: *kair-eez; kav-i-tee*

Better brush to keep those caries away! That's another word for cavities or tooth decay. Caries can happen when you don't brush and floss your teeth regularly. Be sure to visit your dentist at least once a year!

Cementum

Say *si-'ment-əm*

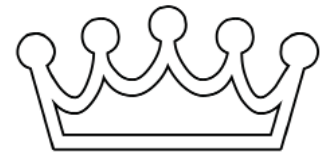
This "cement" is a layer of tough, yellowish, bone-like tissue that covers the root of a tooth. It helps hold the tooth in the socket. The cementum contains the periodontal membrane.

Crown

Say *'kraɪn*

Why did the king go to the dentist? To get his teeth crowned

No, this is not the one on your HEAD but the one on your tooth! This is the visible part of a tooth.



Dentin

Say *dent-in*

This is the hard but porous tissue located under both the enamel and cementum of the tooth. Dentin is harder than bone!!

Diagnosis

Say: *dy-ig-no-sus*

The word diagnosis is how doctors figure out what's making you sick. After you are diagnosed with something, like a cavity, a dentist (the tooth doctor) can treat you to help you get better!

Enamel

Say: *eh-na-mul*

Enamel is the hardest substance in your whole body, and it covers and protects your teeth. This is the tough, shiny, white outer surface of the tooth. Say cheese and show off your enamel!

Floss

Say: *flos*

Flossing each day keeps the dentist away. Why? Flossing is a way of cleaning your teeth and gums. Dental floss is string sometimes coated with wax. When you pull it between your teeth, it reaches tiny places your toothbrush can't and pulls out bits of food and plaque that got left behind. So get out that floss and get to work!

Fluoride

Say: *floor-ide*

This is the fantastic mineral that can help your teeth stay strong and look super! Brush your teeth with toothpaste that contains fluoride to keep your smiles shining!

Gingivitis

Say: *jin-jih-vy-tis*

Got gums? Then you have to protect them against gingivitis, the word for gum disease. So brush and floss to keep those gums feeling fine!

Glucose

Say: *gloo-kose*

When you eat, your body turns the food into a sugar called glucose. Like gas for a car, glucose provides fuel for your cells. How does it get to the cells? It's carried to them by the bloodstream. The hormone insulin helps the glucose get to the cells, so it can be used for energy. Remember that even though your body makes the sugar glucose for energy, too much added sugar from food can weaken teeth and cause tooth decay!

Gums

Say: *gumz*

Believe it or not, you always have gum in your mouth. No, not chewing gum! Look in the mirror and smile. See that pink area where your teeth are attached? Those are called gums, and they help keep your teeth in place.

Incisor

Say *in- 'sī-zər*

This type of tooth has a narrow edge (in humans, the front teeth). Incisors are used to cut food. An incisor has 1 root. We have 8 incisors (4 in the top jaw and 4 in the bottom jaw).

Junk Food

Junk food isn't actually made of garbage. People use the term junk food to describe a food that has few of the nutrients your body needs, and a lot of fat, sugar and salt. Too much fat, sugar, and salt can lead to health problems. Potato chips, candy, and pop are often considered junk food. Too much sugar is not good for keeping strong teeth because it can lead to tooth decay. If you like these snack foods, the trick is to eat them in small portions so that you still get the nutrients you need each day. And brush your teeth afterwards!

Molar

Say *'mō-lər*

Q: What did the dentist see at the North Pole?

A: A molar bear!!

A molar is a wide, flat tooth found in the back of mammal's mouths. Molars grind food during chewing. Molars in the top jaw have 3 roots; molars in the lower jaw have 2 roots. Adults have 12 molars (6 in the top jaw and 6 in the bottom jaw). Children get their first molars around age 6.



Nerves

Say *nərv*

Nerves transmit signals in all parts of your body, including from your teeth! They work to send messages like hot, cold, or pain to and from the brain.

Night Guard

Say: *nite gard*

Nope, these aren't people who protect you when it gets dark! We're talking about the night guards that protect teeth. Night guards are made of plastic and are like the mouth guards that football players use. You wear one when you sleep to keep you from grinding your teeth and wearing them down!

Nutrition

Say: *new-trih-shun*

Nutrition is the study of food and how it works in your body. Nutrition includes all the stuff that's in your food, such as vitamins, protein, fat, and more. It's important to eat a variety of foods, including fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and grains, so you have what you need to grow and be healthy. Check out the nutrition label of some of your favorite packaged foods to learn more about nutrition!

Palate

Say: *pah-lit*

You've probably tickled this part of your mouth with your tongue before - it's the fancy name for the roof of your mouth.

Periodontal membrane/ligament

Say *per-ē-ō- 'dän-təl*

This is the fleshy tissue between tooth and the tooth socket; it holds the tooth in place. The fibers of the periodontal membrane are embedded within the cementum.

Plaque

Say: *plak*

Q: What does the dentist of the year get?

A: A little plaque

Stand back - it's plaque! Plaque is a sticky, slimy substance made up mostly of the germs that cause tooth decay. If too much plaque builds up on and between your teeth, you'll get cavities or - even worse - gum disease! Brush your teeth at least twice every day and floss daily to keep plaque from building up!



Diana Reisz

Premolar (also called bicuspid)

Say *prē- 'mō-lər*

This type of tooth is located between the canine and the molars. A bicuspid tooth has 1 root. Bicuspid teeth have two points (cusps) at the top. Adults have 8 premolars (4 in the top jaw and 4 in the bottom jaw).

Pulp

Say *pəlp*

Just like in a piece of fruit, the pulp is the soft center of the tooth. The pulp contains blood vessels and nerves; it nourishes the dentin.

Retainer

Say: *ree-tay-ner*

Your teeth won't go far, but if you've had braces, they can move even after your braces are removed. That's why you have to wear a retainer. Retainers are removable and they help hold your new smile in place.

Root

Say: *'rūt*

This is the anchor of your tooth! It extends into the jawbone and holds your teeth in place. The number of roots ranges from one to four.

Wisdom Teeth

Say: *wiz-dum teeth*

Why is the Tooth Fairy so smart? She has a lot of wisdom teeth.

You will have learned a lot by the time you get your wisdom teeth, but they don't make you any smarter! Between the ages of 17 and 21, most people get four more molars all the way in the back of the mouth, one in each corner. If wisdom teeth don't grow in properly, they may have to be removed.

Virus

Say: *vy-rus*

Viruses are a type of germ. They're very tiny, and when they get inside your body, they can make you sick. Viruses cause colds, chicken pox, measles, flu, and many other diseases. Unfortunately, antibiotics don't work on viruses like they do on bacteria. Wash your hands often to help prevent the spread of viruses, especially before you eat, after you use the bathroom, or before you touch your teeth or mouth!

X-ray

Say: *eks-ray*

X-rays are special pictures of the inside of your body or mouth. A doctor or dentist will decide when you need an X-ray and what body part needs to be X-rayed. An X-ray machine, not a camera, is used to take these pictures. When the picture comes out, it won't be like the ones in your photo album, but doctors and dentists have learned how to look at these pictures. Doctors and dentists can see broken bones or teeth, lung infections, and more. Superman may have X-ray vision, but your doctor and dentist have X-ray machines!