

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q. What makes teeth “important,” “valuable” or “treasured”?

A. Have the students brainstorm on what makes something treasured. Ask them to brainstorm about things they treasure and why. Ask them if they treasure their teeth.

Q. What do we use our teeth to do?

A. Discuss that teeth are important for speaking, eating and smiling.

Q. How many teeth should I have?

A. Children typically have 20 teeth, but they “lose” these teeth to be replaced by 32 adult teeth that last throughout their lifetimes, if they do what they need to take care of them. The first teeth, sometimes called “baby teeth,” are the “Primary Dentition.” The second teeth, sometimes called “adult teeth” are the “Permanent Dentition.” Refer to “Tooth Chart.”

Q. What are changes to my teeth that I can help to stop from happening?

A. **Cavities (caries)** are the most common dental disease in children. Cavities are from a bacterial infection. Bacterial infections are caused by a type of “germs” called **bacteria**. When the bacteria form on the teeth, it is called **plaque**. The “Ingredients” for a cavity are: 1) plaque 2) sugar 3) a tooth and 4) time. Discuss ***The Plaque Chain***.

Q. How does tooth decay happen?

A. 1) Sugar combines with **plaque**; acid is formed.
2) Enamel is damaged by the acid.
3) The decay spreads into the dentin.
4) If decay goes through the pulp, an abscess may form at the root of the tooth.

Q. What can happen if plaque is left on teeth?

A. Plaque forms along and below the **gums**. Bacteria in the plaque break down the cells in the gums and more blood goes to the area.

Q. What is another disease can be caused by plaque?

A. Plaque that is left on the teeth can lead to gingivitis (gum disease). Plaque forms along and below the gums. Bacteria in the plaque break down the cells in the gums and more blood goes to the area. Because of more blood being in the area, the gums become red and can bleed when brushed or flossed.

Q. Are tooth decay and gum disease contagious?

A. **Contagious** means that you can give a disease to someone or catch it from someone else. Another word for contagious disease is communicable and for a noncontiguous disease is non-communicable. The bacteria or “germs” that lead to **tooth decay** and **gum disease** can spread, but you will not “catch” the germs from everyday contact with the person. It’s not a good idea to share toothbrushes with another person or to keep your toothbrush stored with the head of it touching others. Also, bacteria can also spread from one part of your own body to another part of your body. This is a main reason why the health of your teeth and mouth is so important. If your mouth is full of infection and not treated, this can be a sign of or lead to other problems with the rest of your body including your heart.