

Watch Your Mouth!

A dynamic and thought-provoking classroom lesson for 7th and 8th grade students. *Watch Your Mouth!* shows how informed teens can make smart choices to protect their teeth and health.

Watch Your Mouth! reinforces good oral hygiene habits and focuses on special activities and conditions that require extra “tooth attention.” This program from the American Dental Association (ADA):

- Helps instill in students a sense of competence and responsibility for caring for their teeth and mouth.
- Provides accurate and timely information on behaviors that can cause dental health problems, such as mouth piercing and tobacco use.
- Reinforces dentists’ instructions on properly caring for teeth.

Watch Your Mouth! provides tools that can help you teach students essential dental health care practices:

- A flexible, modular lesson plan
- Support materials
- Hands-on classroom demonstrations
- Student activity sheets
- Suggestions for further dental health activities

Watch Your Mouth! is a valuable teaching tool for teachers, dentists, hygienists, school nurses, physicians and other health care professionals.

Watch Your Mouth!

A classroom lesson in good oral health care, with an emphasis on how informed teens can make smart choices to protect their teeth and health. Includes special activities designed for 7th and 8th grade students.

MESSAGE TO THE TEACHER OR CLASSROOM PRESENTER

Watch Your Mouth! is a flexible oral health education program which can be used as a stand-alone lesson or to supplement your existing health curriculum. It is a valuable teaching tool for teachers, dentists, hygienists, school nurses, physicians and other health care professionals.

Watch Your Mouth! is divided into two modules:

Module 1: "Be Smart about Your Smile!" approximate time: 15 minutes

Module 2: "Going the Extra Mile for Tooth Protection" approximate time: 15 minutes

The lesson objectives, key messages, and discussion topics can be presented in as little as half an hour, or can be supplemented with extra activities and discussions to serve as a full unit on dental care. This allows you to choose the method that will work best with the students. The lesson plan is loosely scripted with discussion questions, explanations and activities that you can easily adapt to your own unique style of teaching.

WATCH YOUR MOUTH! WILL HELP YOUR STUDENTS

This program, developed by the American Dental Association (ADA), will:

- Help instill in students a sense of competence and responsibility for caring for their teeth.
- Provide accurate and timely information on behaviors that can cause dental health problems, such as mouth piercing and tobacco use.
- Reinforce their dentists' instructions on properly caring for their teeth.

WATCH YOUR MOUTH! LESSON OBJECTIVES

The three lesson objectives are targeted to the concerns and interests of the young teen. Students will learn that:

1. Taking good care of our teeth enhances our health and appearance.
2. Special activities and conditions require extra "tooth attention."
3. Avoiding certain activities can protect dental and total health.

BEFORE YOU START...

1. Read over the lesson plan and choose any of the supplemental activities you wish to incorporate.
2. Photocopy the activity sheet *Watch Your Mouth! Crossword Puzzle* for the students.
3. Collect the following materials: new toothbrush, toothpaste; poster board and markers.
4. Have the support materials for this unit handy: *How to Brush; How to Floss; Permanent Tooth Development; Tooth Anatomy; Old and New Toothbrushes; Mouthguard.*

Module 1: “Be Smart about Your Smile!”

15 -30 minutes

Key Message

Taking proper care of your teeth enhances your total health and gives you a more attractive appearance.

Student goals

Upon completing this module students should be aware that good oral health habits:

- Help keep their whole body healthy and fit.
- Can help them do their best at school and in sports (because they will feel better, both physically and psychologically).
- Have cosmetic benefits, including a nicer looking smile, fresh breath, and social confidence.

Module Topics (with discussion points and questions)

1. *Personal appearance.* Let's make a list of things that help a person be more attractive. I don't mean good looking or popular; I'm looking for ideas about what makes people of any age attractive. [List on chalkboard: Personality attributes like friendliness, intelligence, confidence; Physical attributes like their smile, cleanliness, being physically fit, having good health.]
2. *The benefits of a nice smile.* Since we are going to be talking about teeth and good oral health in a few minutes, let's talk a little more about having an attractive smile. What does it take to get and keep a nice smile? [Keep teeth clean by brushing and flossing, visit your dentist, eat nutritious foods, don't smoke.] Yes, all those things affect your smile, your teeth, your health and your appearance.

Good oral health habits play a big part in having a nice smile, speaking well, being able to eat properly and having confidence.

3. *What happens if teeth are not cared for?* So taking care of your teeth sounds like a smart idea. What happens to your teeth if you don't take care of them? [Bad breath, stains, cavities, swollen gums, maybe tooth loss.]
4. *What a cavity is.* None of those things sound very appealing. Let's talk about cavities and what causes them. What is a cavity? [A little hole in your tooth.] Right. A cavity is another name for tooth decay. What happens when something decays? [Gets rotten, falls apart, loses strength.] It's no different with your teeth. When your teeth decay, they lose their strength. The decay can spread throughout your tooth.

**A cavity is a small hole in a tooth,
also known as tooth decay.**

5. *What plaque is.* Does anyone remember what causes cavities? [You may get a variety of answers, but they may not include plaque.] Those are all interesting answers, but there is one thing that plays a big part in causing decay, or cavities, in your teeth. It is called “plaque.” Sound familiar? If you don’t brush your teeth before going to bed at night, how does your mouth feel when you wake up in the morning? [Tastes bad, smells bad, teeth feel sticky.] That is because plaque has been forming in your mouth all night. Plaque is a sticky, clear film that is forming on your teeth 24 hours a day.

**Plaque is a sticky, clear film that is constantly
forming on your teeth.**

6. *How plaque contributes to decay.* When you eat or drink foods containing sugars and starches, the bacteria (germs) in plaque produce acids that attack tooth enamel. The stickiness of the plaque keeps the harmful acids against the teeth. After many such attacks, the tooth enamel — the hard outer layer of each tooth — breaks down and a cavity forms. Each acid attack can last as long as 20 minutes, making cavities bigger and bigger. So, do any of you think you have plaque on your teeth right now?
7. *Plaque and gum disease.* If the plaque is not removed effectively with daily brushing and cleaning between teeth with floss, it eventually hardens into *calculus* or *tartar*. Tartar must be removed, because it makes your teeth more difficult to clean. If tartar is not removed, it can lead to gingivitis, an early form of gum disease in which your gums become irritated and can bleed easily. [*Gingiva* = gums; *-itis* = inflammation] That’s why it is important to brush your teeth twice a day, floss daily and have your teeth professionally cleaned at the dental office.

**The sugars in food and germs in plaque mix together
to make acid. The acids in your mouth attack your teeth
and can make cavities. Repeated acid attacks make
cavities grow bigger.**

**Twice-daily brushing and once-daily flossing help remove
bits of food and plaque from the mouth and are *essential*
in preventing both tooth decay and gum disease.**

7. *Repairing cavities.* What happens when someone gets a cavity in their tooth? Does it heal itself? [No. You have to go to the dentist to get it repaired.] That’s right. Only your dentist can repair a cavity, by removing the decay and putting a special filling material in the hole.

**Cavities cannot go away by themselves.
They must be treated by a dentist.**

8. *Three ways to keep teeth their best.* Let's talk about the three main ways we can keep those "pearly whites" in smiling condition: proper brushing and flossing, eating nutritious foods, and regular dental visits.
9. *Proper brushing.* Let's start with brushing, and list all the good things that happen when we brush our teeth. [Brushing cleans food and plaque off teeth, fights acid, makes your breath smell good, makes your mouth taste good.] Good answers. How often should you brush your teeth? [Twice a day.] There is an important ingredient in most toothpaste that helps your teeth. Does anyone know what it is? [Fluoride.] What does fluoride do? [Fluoride prevents cavities by strengthening and protecting the tooth enamel from acid.]

**Brush twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
Fluoride toothpaste helps prevent cavities by
protecting tooth enamel.**

Move the brush back and forth gently in short strokes. Brush the top, front, and back sides of each tooth. If you are wearing braces, you should ask your general dentist or orthodontist about the best way to brush and keep your teeth clean.

You should also *gently* brush your tongue. Really! Your tongue has lots of germs on it that can cause your breath to smell bad. And by the way, toothbrushes don't last forever. If your toothbrush looks like this (hold up *Old and New Toothbrushes*), with bent or broken bristles, it's time to toss it and get a new one! You should use a toothbrush that is comfortable to hold and easily reaches all tooth surfaces.

ACTIVITY #1: Here is a picture of one way to brush your teeth. It says...
(Show *How to Brush* and read instructions. Ask for questions and comments.)

**Move the brush back and forth gently in short strokes.
Brush the top, front and back sides of each tooth.
Brush your tongue gently, too.**

**Use a toothbrush that easily reaches all tooth surfaces
and is comfortable to hold.**

10. *Flossing.* How many of you floss your teeth each day? Flossing cleans between your teeth, which is just as important as brushing them. There are lots of types of floss you can choose from — waxed, unwaxed, flavored, string or flat tape. Flossing is not as easy to do as brushing, so if you don't remember how, ask your dentist, then practice.

You should floss once a day. Why is flossing important? [Helps remove bits of food and plaque from between teeth, where your toothbrush can't reach. Helps keep your gums healthy.] Your permanent teeth are much closer together than your baby teeth were, and flossing those choppers is essential for healthy teeth and gums — and fresh breath, too! But floss gently. It doesn't take a lot of muscle to remove the plaque and debris from between your teeth — just determination.

Floss your teeth gently, once a day.

ACTIVITY #2: Show floss and explain the technique used in *How to Floss*.

11. *Good nutrition.* How does what we eat and drink affect our teeth? [Get a few comments.] What we eat and drink, and how often, affect how much acid is made by the plaque in our mouths.

What we eat and drink, and how often, affect how much acid is produced in our mouths.

Who remembers the food groups? [List on board.] Eating a mix of foods from these groups for breakfast, lunch and dinner is the best way to keep your teeth and whole body in good shape. You know how important it is to eat right when you are in sports or dance. Well, your teeth are just as affected by what you put in your mouth. Did you know that Olympic athletes have their own dentist? That's because athletes cannot reach peak performance if their mouths are sore or if their teeth ache. Eating a nutritious mix of foods also helps you stay at your proper weight, helps keep your skin clear and makes your hair shiny! (Visit www.mypyramid.gov for more information.) So let's see how good you are at making up some healthy meals.

ACTIVITY #3: Divide the class into teams of four students. See which can be the first group to make up a menu of three balanced meals and two healthy snacks. Discuss the choices, and how nutritious foods benefit your teeth as well as your total health.

Eating a nutritious mix of foods from the food groups is the best way to keep your teeth and body healthy.

Those are very creative meal ideas! But what about sweets? Do you have to give up ALL sweets to have a healthy body and teeth? [Get opinions.] Munching on snacks all day and drinking lots of soda pop is not good for your body. It can cause an unhealthy

weight gain and cavities, too! Who remembers what happens in our mouths after we eat? Yes, plaque and sugar mix to form acid. Then the acid attacks our teeth. The more often we eat snacks, the more acid attacks we have. Don't eat too many sweets or drink a lot of soda pop. But if you have sweets, eat or drink them with your meals, because your saliva helps wash the acid off your teeth. If you need a snack between meals, choose nutritious foods like fruit, low-fat cheese, low-fat yogurt, or raw vegetables. If you are thirsty, have a glass of water or low-fat milk.

**If you want sweets, eat or drink them with your meals.
If you snack, eat nutritious foods.**

What about chewing gum? [Get opinions.] Chewing gum for about 20 minutes immediately after a meal or snack is okay as long as the gum is sugarless. In fact, sugar-free gum makes your mouth produce more saliva, which helps rinse the acid off your teeth to prevent tooth decay.

**Chewing sugarless gum increases saliva and
helps wash out food and acid.**

12. *Dental visits.* So far we have talked about three important ways you can care for your teeth — brushing, flossing and eating nutritious foods. There is one more very important thing we should all do to keep our teeth healthy — visit our dentist regularly. What does your dentist do? Let's list some of the things that can happen during a routine dental visit. [Examines your teeth, gums and the rest of your mouth to see if they are healthy; tells you how to take good care of your teeth; fixes cavities and repairs teeth; checks your mouth for sores and signs of cancer; sometimes takes X-rays to see the insides of teeth and jawbone; gives you a fluoride treatment.]

What else? [You have your teeth professionally cleaned.] Why is that important? [Even when you brush well, some plaque stays on your teeth and, over time, hardens into tartar. Tartar can only be removed by a professional cleaning.] Who remembers what we said earlier about why tartar must be removed from teeth? [Tartar must be removed because it makes your teeth more difficult to clean. If tartar is not removed, it can lead to *gingivitis*, an early form of gum disease in which your gums become irritated and can bleed easily.]

Ask your dentist when your next visit should be!

**Visit your dentist regularly.
A routine dental visit includes an examination of your teeth
and mouth, professional cleaning, and may include X-rays,
repair of damaged teeth and a fluoride treatment.**

Summary: *Good oral health care provides many benefits that go beyond cavity prevention.*

- *It helps keep your whole body healthy and fit.*
- *It can help you do your best at school and in sports, because you will feel better, both physically and mentally.*
- *It has cosmetic benefits, including a nicer looking smile, fresh breath, and social confidence.*

Module 2: “Going the Extra Mile for Tooth Protection” approximate time: 15 minutes

Key Message

In addition to daily dental health care, there are many ways that teens can protect their smiles.

Student goals

Upon completing this module students should be aware of additional ways that teeth can be protected and kept healthy:

- Recognizing and eliminating behaviors that can harm teeth, such as mouth piercing and tobacco use.
- Wearing mouthguards during active sports is important to protect teeth, mouth and face.

Module Topics (with discussion points and questions)

1. *Popular behaviors and bad habits that can damage teeth and health.* One of the toughest parts about being a teen is that you have to make choices that can affect your health, your appearance and your future. Some are just little things, like how you wear your hair, but some are decisions that can have a lasting effect on your life. We are going to talk about a few that are directly related to the health of your teeth and mouth.
2. *Trends and peer pressure.* Why is it so hard sometimes to make smart choices? [Comments may include: developing bad habits; the difficulty of going against trends or peer pressure; not knowing what the smart choice is; sometimes bad choices are more fun than good choices.] What are some choices that you may have to make — either now or as you get older — that can affect your teeth and mouth? [mouth piercing/mouth jewelry; smoking; chewing tobacco; eating too much junk food and drinking too much soda pop; not visiting the dentist; not using a mouthguard]
3. *Bad habits.* Let’s talk first about getting rid of a bad habit that many of us have — chewing on hard objects. Do you ever find yourself chewing on ice cubes, pencils and pens? Chewing on hard objects — even hard candy — can chip or crack your teeth. Your teeth are made to last a lifetime, but they are made for chewing food only! How can you break a bad habit like chewing on hard objects? [Put notes reminding yourself not to chew on things around your house and desk; ask friends to remind you if they see you chewing on stuff; chew more sugarless gum.] It’s hard to break bad habits, but you can do it! Recognizing that you have a bad habit is the first step.

**Don’t chew on hard objects like pencils,
ice cubes or hard candy.
Ask friends and family to help you break bad habits.**

4. *Tobacco.* There is another bad habit that is very dangerous, not only for your teeth, but for your mouth and entire body: using tobacco products. ALL tobacco is bad for your health, not just cigarettes and cigars. Smokeless tobacco, also called chew, snuff, dip or spitting tobacco, has become a very serious health problem for teens and young adults today. You know that smoking cigarettes can eventually kill you. You may not know that smokeless tobacco can cause mouth, tongue and lip cancer, and can be more addictive than cigarettes. Tobacco products also stain your teeth and cause gum disease and tooth loss. That certainly won't help your appearance any! Listen to these statistics: 1.) Approximately 28,000 people were diagnosed as having oral (mouth) cancer last year. Many of them probably thought they were safe because they used smokeless tobacco. Wrong! 2.) About 7,200 people will die from mouth cancer this year. AND – tobacco products cost a lot of money! Bottom line: There is nothing good to say about tobacco products. Never starting is your best defense against all the health problems related to tobacco.

Tobacco products are expensive and cause gum disease, tooth loss and cancer. BE SMART; DON'T START! AND SAVE MONEY, TOO!

ACTIVITY #4: Working in pairs, have the students write anti-tobacco-use slogans. Choose a class favorite and write it on a large piece of poster board to hang in your classroom.

5. *Mouth jewelry.* Let's talk about mouth jewelry. You might think pierced lips and tongues are attractive, or you might not, but you probably don't know just how dangerous these piercings can be. What do you think can happen to your teeth and mouth from piercings? [List on chalkboard: mouth sores and infections; chipped or cracked teeth; you can choke.] That's a good start, but it gets worse! Your mouth contains millions of bacteria, and infection and pain often occur with mouth piercing. Your mouth and tongue can swell up large enough to close off your airway. Piercing can also cause nerve damage and uncontrollable bleeding. You can choke on parts that come off in your mouth, and you can crack your teeth if you bite down on the jewelry. Mouth piercing is a decision that goes way past looking fashionable — it can have a big effect on your health!

Mouth piercing can result in infection, swelling, pain, choking, uncontrolled bleeding and cracked or chipped teeth.

6. *Mouthguards.* There is a good habit you can get into that will help protect your teeth from getting broken or knocked out. Does anyone know what I'm thinking of? I'll give you a hint. You use it for active sports. [Mouthguard.] That's right! A mouthguard. How many of you have ever worn a mouthguard? A mouthguard is a piece of soft, molded plastic that covers your upper teeth. Your dentist can make one that fits your teeth exactly, or you can buy an unshaped mouthguard that can be softened in boiling water and then shaped to fit over your teeth.

ACTIVITY #5: Mouthguard. Here is a picture of a mouthguard. Can someone explain to the class how it fits on the teeth?

Why is it so important to use a mouthguard? [Because if you lose your permanent teeth, new ones will not grow in to replace them.] Do you know anyone who has had teeth knocked out during sports? Will those teeth ever grow back? Mouthguards also help prevent injuries to your lips, face and jaw. Wearing a mouthguard is very smart even if you don't think it's a great fashion statement!

ACTIVITY #6: Let's make a list of all the sports and activities that we can think of in which your teeth and mouth might be injured. (Remember to include non-team sports such as skateboarding, gymnastics and rollerblading.)

Mouthguards protect teeth from injury and should be used during all active sports.

Your dentist can make a custom mouthguard, or a self-fitted mouthguard can be purchased at a store.

Summary: *In addition to the basics of good oral hygiene, smart teens avoid behaviors that can damage their health and appearance, and protect their teeth during active sports by wearing mouthguards.*

ACTIVITY #7: Have students work individually or in pairs to complete the activity sheet *Watch Your Mouth! Crossword Puzzle*. [You may wish to have copies of *Permanent Tooth Development* and *Tooth Anatomy* available as a reference.]

SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITIES

1. Pass out copies of ADA brochure "Think Before You Chew." Discuss "Sean's Story" and real life experiences with tobacco use and consequences. Copies of this brochure are available for purchase from the ADA by calling 1-800-947-4746.
2. Bring a store-bought mouthguard to class and talk about how it helps protect teeth. (You may be able to get one from your school's physical education department.) Also, remind students that their dentist can make a mouthguard custom-fitted to their mouth.
3. Have students make a bulletin board display of fads or popular behaviors which occurred in the 50s, 60s 70s, 80s, 90s and today. Discuss any that had long-term health or appearance consequences.
4. Have a poster contest: "Smart Kids Don't Smoke (or Chew Tobacco)!"
5. Have students develop a "Dental Health Quiz" which awards points for good oral health habits.
6. Invite a dentist to your class. (Dental Organizations often provide a list of speakers. Visit the Dental Organizations section of ADA.org, to search for a State or Local Dental Organization nearest you. <http://www.ada.org/goto/organizations/index.asp>)
7. For more online classroom resources, visit the Students & Teachers section of ADA.org. <http://www.ada.org/public/education/index.asp>

SUPPORT MATERIALS: CHARTS AND DIAGRAMS

- *How to Brush*
- *How to Floss*
- *Permanent Tooth Development*
- *Tooth Anatomy*
- *Old and New Toothbrushes*
- *Mouthguard*

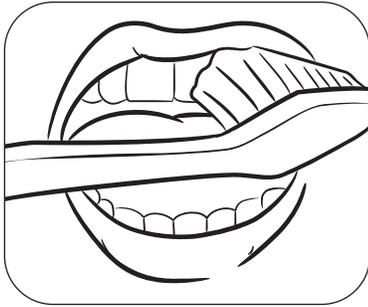
STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET(S)

- *Watch Your Mouth! Crossword Puzzle*

Additional educational materials are available for purchase by calling 1-800-947-4746 or by visiting www.adacatalog.org.

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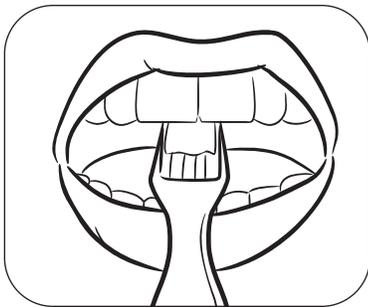
How to Brush



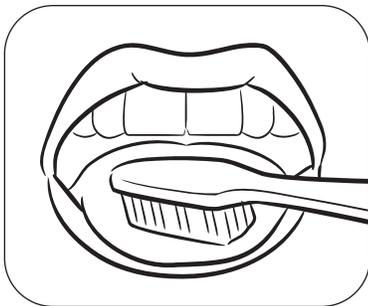
- Place the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle to the gums.



- Move the brush back and forth gently in short strokes.

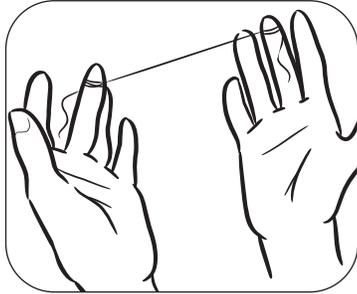


- Brush the outer surfaces, the inside surfaces and the chewing surfaces of all teeth.
- To clean the inside surface of the front teeth, tilt the brush vertically and make several up-and-down strokes.

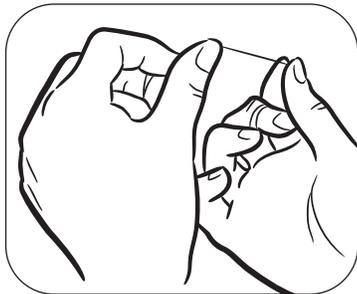


- Brush your tongue to remove bacteria and keep your breath fresh.

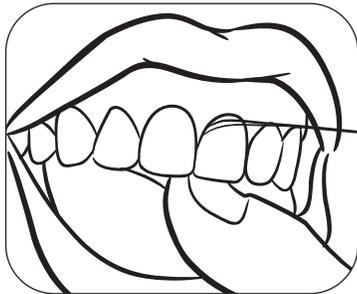
How to Floss



- Use about 18 inches of floss wound around one of your middle fingers, with the rest wound around the opposite middle finger.



- Hold the floss tightly between the thumbs and forefingers and gently insert it between the teeth.



- Curve the floss into a "C" shape against the side of the tooth.

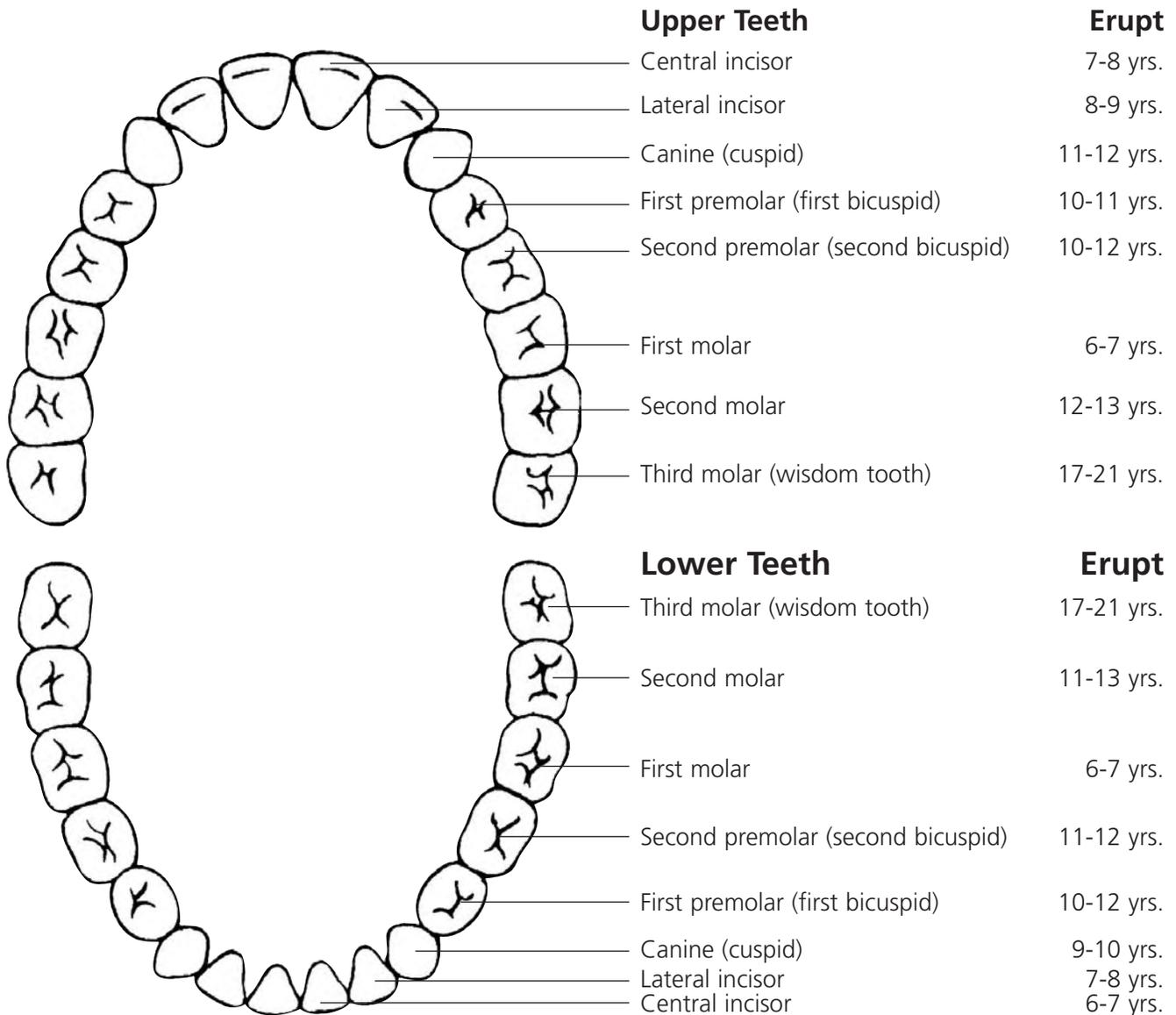


- Rub the floss gently up and down, keeping it pressed against the tooth. Don't jerk or snap the floss.

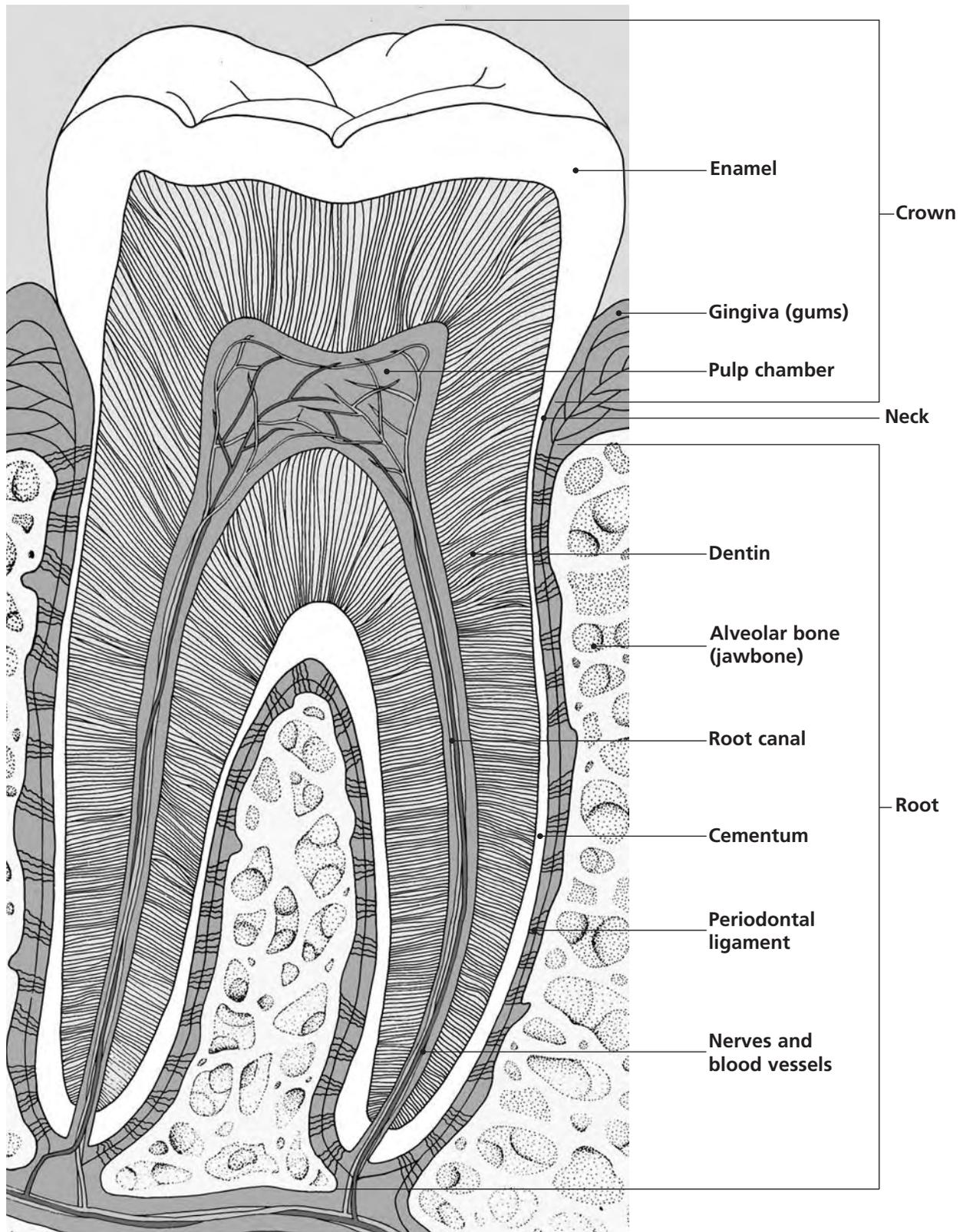


- Floss all your teeth. Don't forget to floss behind your back teeth.

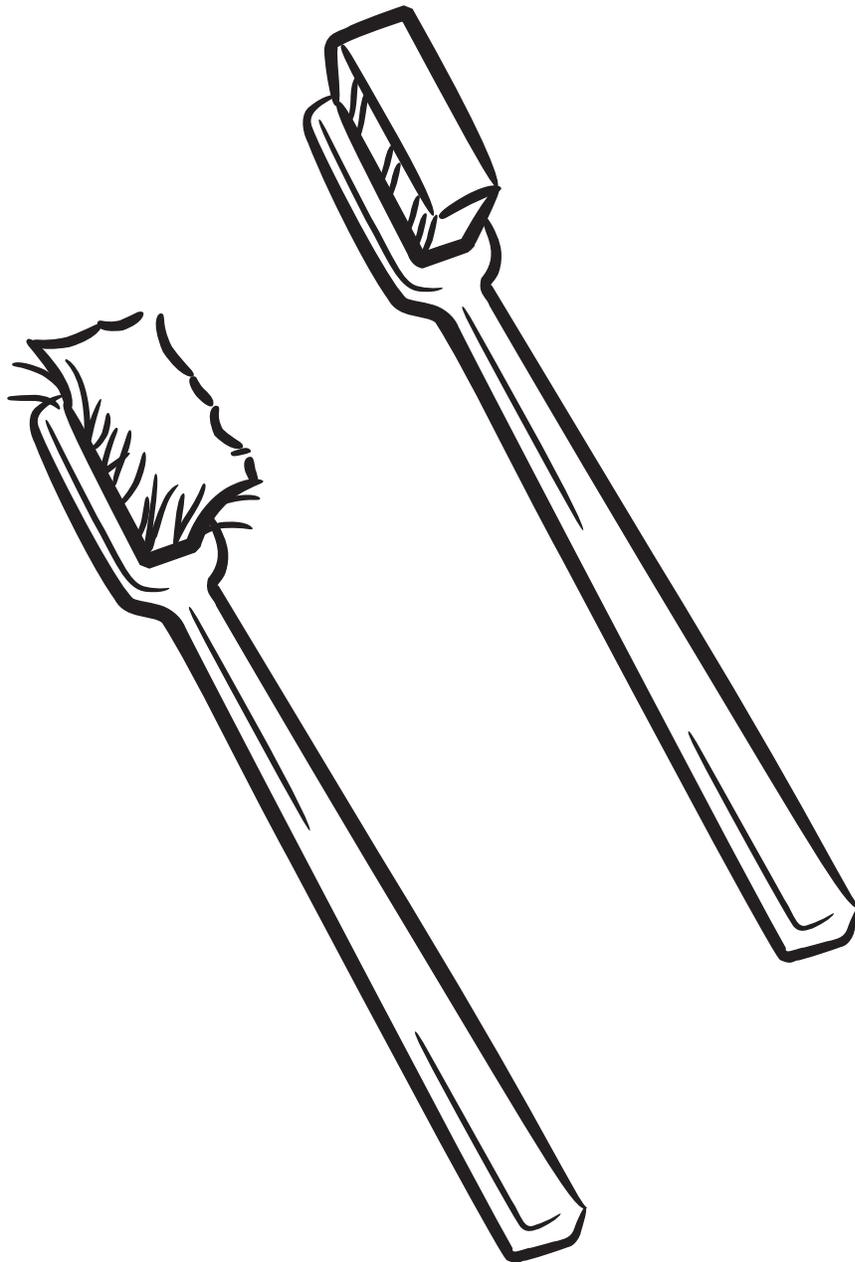
Permanent Tooth Development



Tooth Anatomy



Old & New Toothbrushes

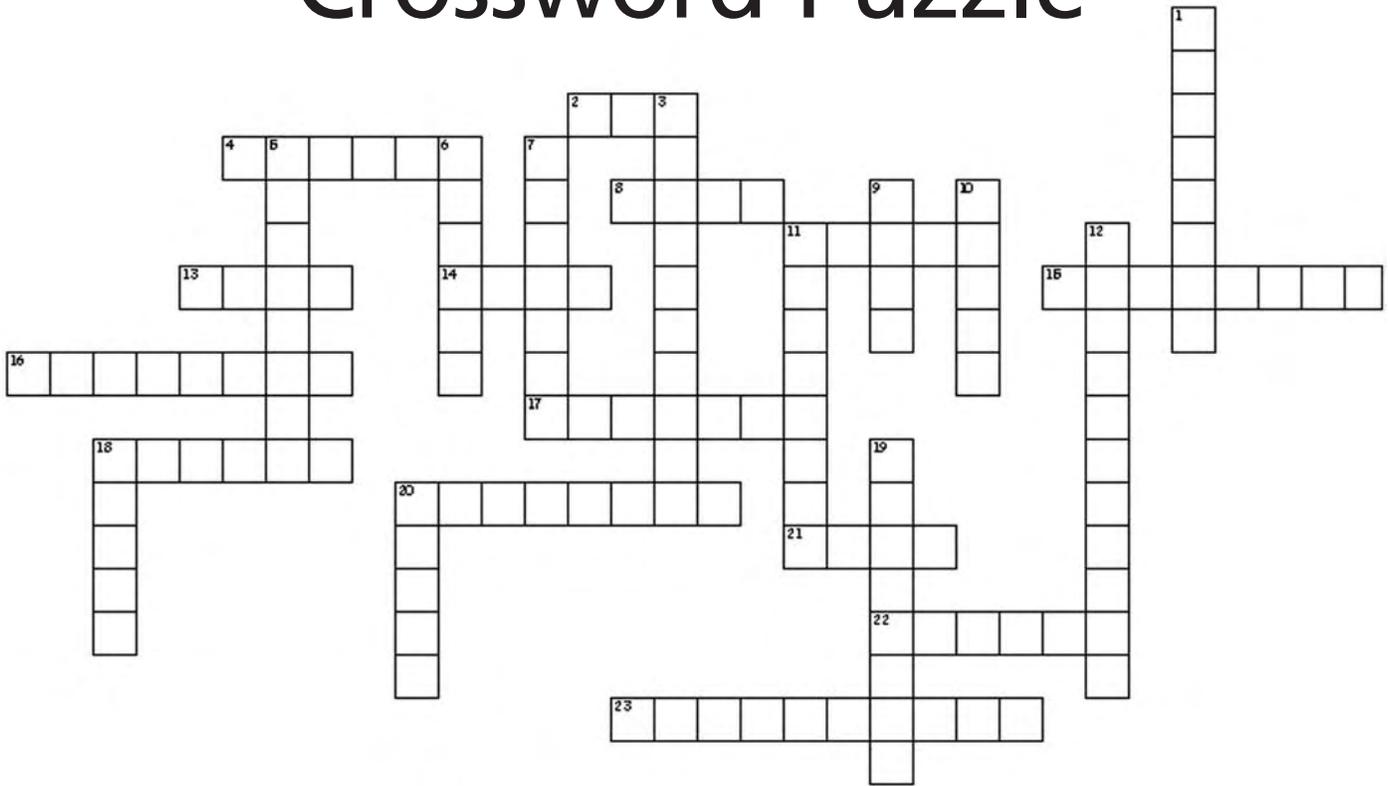


Mouthguard



Watch Your Mouth!

Crossword Puzzle



Across

2. A food, deep yellow inside, belonging to the vegetables group
4. A primary cause of cavities and gingivitis
8. The innermost tissue of a tooth
11. With good personal and professional care, you should keep your teeth as long as you are ____.
13. The unit you are studying is about ____ health.
14. A liquid containing calcium
15. The thin, hard covering of the root of a tooth
16. Most dentists recommend a tooth brush with soft _____.
17. A dangerous product that is bad for your total health
18. A food with a white inside, belonging to the vegetables group
20. A natural substance which can help prevent cavities
21. A member of the grains group, frequently eaten in Asian countries
22. A watery secretion that bathes teeth and promotes digestion
23. Used to remove plaque

Down

1. The most common dental disease among young people
3. Protects teeth during sports
5. The periodontal _____ holds the tooth in its bony socket.
6. The hard outer covering of a tooth
7. Coating that protects teeth from decay
9. The part of the mouth just outside the teeth
10. A good substitute for meat
11. The type of bone in which teeth are embedded
12. _____ disease can result in destruction of tissues surrounding the tooth.
18. A fuzzy-skinned member of the fruits group
19. The front teeth
20. Cleans between teeth



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