

ACTIVITY IDEAS: KEEPING TEETH HEALTHY

✓ TALKING POINTS

- **What are some ways we can help keep our teeth healthy?** *(Possible answers: brush our teeth twice a day; eat healthy foods; eat foods with calcium; stay away from sugary drinks; visit the dentist two times a year.)*
- **Can you name some healthy foods?** *(Possible answers: apples, carrots, milk, grapes, whole grain bread.)*
- **What foods and drinks have a lot of sugar in them?** *(Possible answers: candy, soda, cake, cookies, sweets.)*
- **What happens when sugary foods stay on our teeth?** *(Answer: Germs called bacteria mix with the sugar and make plaque. If plaque stays on our teeth, it can eat away our teeth, causing cavities and tooth decay.)*

5 HAVE 5 MINUTES?

ACTIVITY ONE: Brush Away Sugary Plaque

Have the Ally Gator toy hold up Teaching Card #5, "Keeping My Teeth Healthy." Use the Talking Points on the back of the card.

ACTIVITY TWO: Eat for Healthy Teeth

Have Ally Gator hold up Teaching Card #6, "Eat for Healthy Teeth." Follow the Talking Points on the back of the

card to discuss how eating healthy foods can help keep our teeth strong and healthy.

ACTIVITY THREE: Choose a Healthy Snack

Brainstorm with the children to create a list of healthy snack foods. (You can show them where the healthy snacks fit on the MyPlate placemat.) Remind children to brush their teeth even after eating healthy snacks.



15 HAVE 15 MINUTES?

ACTIVITY ONE: Healthy or Not?

Find pictures from each of the five food groups on MyPlate (grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, protein), and pictures of sticky, sugary foods. Place a trash can and a plate in front of you. Tell the children the plate is for healthy foods, and the trash can is for sticky, sugary snack foods. As you hold up the pictures of various foods, ask if the pictures show a healthy, nutritious food or a sugary snack food. Each time, ask a student to put the food where it belongs, either on the plate if it is healthy, or in the trash if it is not.

**ACTIVITY TWO:
Make a Healthy Snack**
Make and share a healthy snack together with the children.

(Suggestions: celery and carrot sticks with ranch dressing; fresh fruit with yogurt; cheese and crackers.) As the children eat, read *The Tooth Elf* storybook. After the story, remind children of the importance of brushing teeth after eating. (If you have time, have the children brush their teeth as a group following the guidelines on page 31.)

ACTIVITY THREE: Get Calcium

Gather the children. Explain that calcium is a very important mineral. (You can show children what calcium looks like in supplement form.) Our bodies need calcium to make our bones and teeth strong. We get our calcium from milk and dairy products. Explain that some people do not eat dairy foods, so they get their calcium from other places. Children who follow a vegan diet need to get their calcium from foods like soy and dark green leafy vegetables. If possible, let children sample foods that are rich in calcium like milk, cheese and/or dairy alternatives such as soy milk, or orange juice with calcium.

ACTIVITY FOUR: Attack Plaque

With the help of adult volunteers, use plaque disclosing tablets before group brushing so children can see areas of the teeth that need to be cleaned. (For small children, use half a tablet.) Parental consent in advance is recommended (please see the take-home letter on page 23). Some students may be allergic to dyes and unable to participate.