

# West Virginia WIC's "Learning for Health" Project

## Lesson #7

### Beautiful Teeth and Gums - Keep Up the Good Work!

In this session, participants will discuss specific things to do every day to keep gums and teeth healthy.

#### Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, parents/caregivers will be able to:

1. Share at least one idea to get kids to brush/floss each day.
2. Participate in discussion on why brushing and flossing are important to children and adults.
3. Choose at least one specific action they will try to increase brushing & flossing every day.

#### Materials

- Lesson Plan Posters (2)
- Copies of Parent Fact Sheet (1 two-sided sheet)
- Child's SOFT tooth brush, toothpaste, tooth and gum model, if desired to demonstrate proper brushing
- Easel, flip chart and colorful markers

#### Preparation

- Set up room in an informal way - chairs in a semi-circle if possible.
- Hang up the posters so all the group participants can see them easily OR you can attached the posters to an easel and show them at the appropriate time.

#### Introduction

- Introduce yourself and welcome everyone.
- Explain the purpose of the group and the estimated time.
- Have each group member share his or her name.

## Discussion Questions

### Why is it important to help your child have healthy teeth?

- Healthy teeth in childhood are very important for strong, straight teeth later in life.
- A lot of adult tooth problems go back to problems with baby teeth.
- Healthy teeth and gums make it easier for a young child to eat a variety of foods.
- Rotting or decaying baby teeth may be painful and have to be pulled.

### What do you think are good ways to help your child have healthy teeth and gums?

List the ideas. Things that might be mentioned:

- It is best for families to drink fluoridated water. It makes teeth stronger.
- Find out if you tap water has fluoride in it. If it does not, ask your dentist or doctor about fluoride drops.
- Clean your child's teeth twice a day using a small, soft toothbrush and water.
- Children can start using fluoridated toothpaste at 2 years of age, but they only need a pea-sized amount. Make sure your child spits out the toothpaste after brushing.
- Any brand of toothpaste is fine so pick a less expensive brand that has fluoride.
- Supervise your child while he is brushing. As a matter of fact, why don't you brush your teeth together? Kids love to copy their favorite role models!
- You can show your child how to floss their teeth and gently help them practice flossing their teeth.
- Limiting candy, dried fruit, and other foods that stick to the teeth can help prevent early childhood caries.
- Help your child use a cup for drinks instead of a bottle after they turn 1 year old.
- Get your baby off the bottle completely around 12 months old. It is easier to do this around 12 months. If you wait until 18 months or later, your child may

not want to give up the bottle.

- Have you ever seen a young child with decayed teeth? They were probably on the bottle too long.
- Take your child to the dentist by age two for their first checkup.
- If you see any changes in tooth color (like any dark areas), take your child to the dentist as soon as possible.

## Activity

- Demonstrate proper brushing using a tooth and gum model, a toothbrush and toothpaste.
  - Show the toothbrush package and point out that they should use a “soft” bristle toothbrush for their children.
  - Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.
  - Demonstrate proper brushing - up from the bottom, down from the top using a soft stroke and brush the gums as well as the teeth.
  - Emphasize that toothpaste should be spit out and not swallowed after brushing.

## Evaluation/Wrap-up

- Here is something that you might be interested in (hold up copy of fact sheet if not passed out already). It includes many of the things we talked about today.
- Who would like one? (pass out to interested participants)
- Will any of you try something new with you children? What kids of things will you do?
- Thank them for coming to the group and participating. Let them know that they can call you or stop by for more information whenever they wish.