FEBRUARY IS
NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

FIDKIDS.COM

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PROTECT MY TEETH?

The mouth is an important part of the body. Your mouth is made up of teeth, gums, the tongue, palate, cheeks, lips, and salivary glands which all work together to help you smile, breathe, talk, and eat.

Why are brushing and flossing your teeth important to keep your mouth healthy?

After you eat, leftover sugars from the food and drinks you consume throughout the day turn into a fuzzy, sticky feeling on your teeth. When this is not removed regularly, it attracts sugar bugs which feed on your teeth. These sugar bugs start to weaken the armor on your teeth. This continued attack on the armor leads to holes in your teeth. Having the holes in your teeth from these sugar bugs can be painful and lead to more serious problems later on. If the leftover sugars are left for a long time, they can cause puffy, sore, and bleeding gums. If those sick gums are not treated, it can lead to infection around the roots of your teeth, which can result in tooth loss.

It can take 30–45 minutes after you eat or drink for your mouth's saliva to start to fix tooth enamel and restore the armor. When you brush your teeth, drink water, and eat healthy food, your mouth's saliva brings in workers to help fix the tiny holes and make the shield strong again (remineralization). Your mouth's saliva can't fix your teeth alone – it requires a minimum of brushing for two minutes two times a day, flossing every day, and eating healthy food to create strong, healthy teeth. Due to the changes in your mouth that happen right after eating or drinking, you should wait at least 30 minutes to brush your teeth after you finish eating and/or drinking.

For this experiment, think of the white cubes as your teeth, and build a castle for the second tooth fairy.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Sugar cubes
- Food coloring
- Hot and cold water
- Eyedroppers
- Plastic cups
- Plastic plates

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Provide each student with 20 sugar cubes.
2. Let each student add sugar cubes to a plastic plate and build their own castle made of "teeth".
3. Add food coloring to a cup of cold water. You can make different color mixtures to represent different types of sugar.
4. Have each student fill their eyedropper with the mixture and drop onto their sugar cube tower as many times as they'd like. Watch as the mixture infects the teeth.
5. Have each student fill their eyedropper with hot water and drop onto their sugar cube tower as many times as they would like. Watch as the teeth erode.
6. Ask each student if they can rebuild the tower using the same cubes they originally used.
7. Discuss how you can't regrow lost tooth enamel (the armor on teeth) since it is not living tissue and can't repair itself once it is gone.
8. Discuss how you can strengthen weakened enamel and reverse early decay through remineralization with fluoride toothpaste and good hygiene, which includes flossing and regular brushing after meals, along with visiting your pediatric dentist twice a year.

FIDKIDS.COM

FEBRUARY IS

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH