Objectives

Lessons with modifications
- Brushing Lesson
- Flossing Lesson
- Hand Washing Lesson
- Germs and Cavities Lesson
- Nutrition for Healthy Teeth Lesson

List of Supplemental Resources
**KEY POINTS:**

- Brush your teeth for 2 minutes twice a day: once in the morning and once at night.
- Use a pea-size amount of toothpaste.
- Brushing your teeth helps prevent cavities. Cavities make teeth unhealthy and weak.
- Visit the dentist 2 times a year or once every 6 months.

**SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS:**

- Depending on individual needs, the use of a finger to demonstrate brushing may not be possible. Allow the youth to watch you pretend to brush your teeth with your finger, gain comfort with the process, and then, either repeat this with their own finger or with an actual toothbrush.

- Rinsing the mouth with water requires spitting. Depending on individual needs, this activity may need to take place where a youth can actually spit in the event this happens by accident.

- Demonstrating brushing in a typical environment where it may happen (at a sink) to address the individual's mobility needs and/or physical comfort may help in translating this practice into daily life.

- Provide a timer for youth who are aware of time and/or benefit from timing visuals in the learning process.

- Certain flavors of toothpaste, if using it in the demonstration, may not appeal to youth with special needs. Bring alternative flavors of toothpaste for them to test.

**LESSON SCRIPT:**

Do you know what this is?

*Hold up a toothbrush and allow children to guess. You may want to hold up the various models of toothbrushes to include an oral teething brush, an oral swab, a tooth wipe and actual toothbrushes.*

Correct. It is a toothbrush. What do we use a toothbrush for?

*Use this opportunity to gauge what children already know about brushing teeth.*
I’m glad to hear that you already know what we use a toothbrush for. Today, we are going to learn why we brush our teeth and how we should brush our teeth. We will start by learning about what teeth are made of.

Part 1: Why Do We Brush Our Teeth?
Teeth have three layers, but we cannot see all of them. The part of a tooth that you can see is called the crown. Most of the crown is made of a hard, white material called enamel.
*Point to the crown and enamel on the tooth diagram.*

Underneath the enamel are 2 layers: dentin and pulp.
*Point to the dentin and pulp on the tooth diagram.*

The pulp is important because it contains blood vessels, nerves, and roots.

Everything inside of the dentin and the pulp helps keep your teeth healthy and strong. This is one reason why we cannot see the dentin and the pulp. They are protected by the outside of the tooth.

Now, can someone tell me what we use our teeth for?
*Allow children to respond.*

Those as all correct. We certainly use our teeth to smile. We also use our teeth to chew our food. Sometimes when we eat, food can get stuck on and in between our teeth. Has anyone ever had something stick to their teeth after eating?
*Take a few answers.*

We need to brush our teeth to remove any food or drink that sticks to our teeth. If we do not do this, we might get a cavity. Has anyone heard of a cavity?
*Take a few answers.*

A cavity is a hole in a tooth. Do you remember that we said how important the inside of a tooth is?

If a tooth has a cavity, or a hole, then the inside of the tooth is not protected. It is hard for a tooth to be healthy and strong when the inside is not protected.

To prevent cavities, we need to brush our teeth two times each day: once in the morning and once before bed. We should also visit the dentist 2 times a year.

Part 2: How Do We Brush Our Teeth?
Now we are going to learn how to brush our teeth.

Can everyone see the picture of the mouth that I am holding up?
*Hold up diagram of full mouth or 3-D model.*
We have teeth on the top and the bottom of our mouth.  
*Point to teeth as you call out the top and bottom sections.*

We also see that our teeth have a front, back, and top.  
*Point to a front, back, and top section for a tooth.*

When we brush our teeth, we should remember four things to prevent cavities.

1.) We should use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste on our toothbrush.

Can you show me how big a pea is?  
*Allow children to show you how small a pea is.*

Good. Remember that a pea is not that big! We do not need to use a lot of toothpaste to keep our teeth clean.  
*Perhaps bring something this small as a demonstration.*

2.) We need to brush the top, front, and back part of each tooth. Food can stick anywhere on the tooth, so it is important to make sure that all parts are clean.  
*Show children the top, back, and front of teeth using a 3-D tooth model*

3.) To brush our teeth correctly, we should make small circles with our toothbrush on each tooth.  
*Demonstrate how to hold and move a toothbrush and give children and young adults time to practice.*

4.) We need to brush our teeth twice a day: once in the morning and once at night before bed. Each time, we should brush our teeth for two minutes.

*Does two minutes seem like a lot of time or a little amount of time?*  
*Allow children and young adults to express thoughts and respond accordingly.*

*Talk about using a timing device and demonstrate different types. If children and young adults respond well to songs, you could make up a 2-minute song.*

Two minutes might seem like a long time when you are brushing your teeth, but taking the time to make sure that all of your teeth are clean is very important! Good! We have now learned 4 important things about brushing teeth. Let’s review them.

1. Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.
2. Brush the top, back, and front of each tooth.
3. Use a circular motion to properly clean each tooth.
4. Brush your teeth twice a day: once in the morning and once at night. Brush your teeth for 2 minutes each time.
KEY POINTS:

- Flossing removes plaque and food in between your teeth where your toothbrush cannot reach.
- Flossing should be done at least once a day.

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS:

- Depending upon individual needs, the learning transfer of the hand and yarn exercise may not apply well to some youth and young adults.
- Provide alternative forms of floss, such as dental picks, floss holders and floss sticks.

LESSON SCRIPT:

Do you know what this is?
Hold up the white yarn and allow children and young adults to answer.

That is right! It is a string. We use string for lots of things. Can you think of some times when we need a string?
Accept some answers - kite, tying packages, balloons, hanging pictures, tying shoes, etc.

This (hold up floss) is a different kind of string and it is called dental floss. Floss is a special string and it is different than regular string because dental floss is only for our mouth.

Do you know what it is used for?
Take two answers and praise the children and young adults for answering the question with statements like, “I like your thinking, but that wasn’t the answer I was looking for.”

This special string is used to help clean our teeth.

When we eat, little tiny bits of food stick to all sides of our teeth. We can’t see this food because it is soooooo tiny. Sometimes we can feel it with our tongue because the tiny bits of food make our teeth feel fuzzy. Do your teeth feel fuzzy? Use your tongue to move around your teeth and see if they feel fuzzy.

Touch your nose if your teeth feel fuzzy in some places.
Exaggerate moving your tongue around in your mouth and then touch your nose.

Oh, I see some people are touching their nose like me. We have some places on our teeth that feel fuzzy right now.
How do we get the fuzzies off of our teeth and make them feel clean?

*Take two or three answers.*

Do you think you could get the food out between your own teeth with your own fingers? I can’t because my fingers are too big.

So how can we clean the two sides we cannot touch with our fingers or toothbrush?

*Take a couple of answers again and remember to praise children and young adults for participation even if the answer is wrong.*

We can clean between our teeth with our special string.

*Hold up the dental floss.*

We know how to use a toothbrush to clean our teeth, but how do we use floss to clean our teeth? I have a helper who is going to help me show you how to floss your teeth.

*Invite a helper up to the front.*

My helper is showing us two teeth with his/her fists. I am going to use this yarn for my floss so everyone can see what I am doing.

I am going to wrap the yarn around my two fingers (*index fingers*) and hold it with my thumbs so it is nice and tight.

Then, I am going to slip it gently between the two teeth.

I will first wrap it gently around the side of one of the teeth making sure I keep the string nice and tight.

Next, I will gently raise my floss up and down to remove any food or bacteria from between my teeth. I will then wrap around the side of the other tooth and raise the floss up and down on the second tooth removing the bacteria and food.

I need to do this to all of my teeth.

It is very important that you floss once a day.

Ask an adult for help if you need to. You should have an adult in your family help you until you are able to do this by yourself.

The most important thing is to get your teeth clean. Brush twice a day and floss twice a day.
Hand Washing Lesson
Supplement for Children and Young Adults with Special Needs

KEY POINTS:
• You cannot see them, but germs are everywhere.
• Germs can make us sick.
• We should wash our hands to prevent germs from spreading and to protect ourselves against germs.

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS:
• Depending on individual needs, some youth may not like the sensation of water on their hands or hand washing is an undesired repetitive behavior. Offer youth the option of hand sanitizer, while realizing that some have a strong scent that some children and young adults may be sensitive to. Allow the individual to “sniff” it first to determine their comfort level before applying it to their hands.

LESSON SCRIPT:

Has anyone heard about germs before?
Allow children and young adults to answer and respond accordingly.

It seems like a few of you have heard about germs. Has anyone ever seen a germ? Can you tell me what a germ looks like?
Allow children and young adults to answer and respond accordingly.

It’s hard for us to describe what a germ looks like because they are so small. Actually, we need to use a microscope in order to see germs.

Germs are small bacteria that cause diseases. They are everywhere and they can make us sick. Today, we are going to learn what to do to protect ourselves against germs so that we can stay healthy.

Part 1: How can we protect ourselves against germs?
We have already learned that—although we can’t see them—germs are everywhere. Germs are at school, at home, and most places we go. Since we spend time at all of these places, we need to make sure that we protect ourselves against germs to stay healthy.

The best way to protect yourself against germs is by washing your hands.

Let’s review some important times to wash our hands.
- After being outside
- Before eating or touching food
- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose
- Whenever your hands feel dirty
- After you cough

Can you think of any other times when it might be a good idea to wash your hands?
*Allow children and young adults to respond.*

**Part 2: How should we wash our hands?**
We have already learned that the best way to protect ourselves against germs is by washing our hands. We have also learned about good times to wash our hands. Now, we are going to learn how to wash our hands.

Let’s review a few important steps:
*(Optional): Prepare a poster with each step.*

1. Use warm water to wet your hands.
2. After your hands are wet, it is time to soap them up! Any type of soap is good. Some soap is a liquid and some soap is a bar. You might even chose to use a soap that smells nice!
3. Rub both of your hands together. You might notice that the soap on your hands appears bubbly or foamy. This is a good thing! It means that you are working up a lather.
4. Be sure to lather soap on both sides of your hand and in between your fingers. Germs can be anywhere on your hand!
5. Don’t rush! It is a smart idea to sing the ABCs (or Happy Birthday!) two times.
6. Rinse your hands with water to remove the soap.
7. Dry your hands with an air dryer or a clean towel.

**Good job everyone. Now we are going to practice washing our hands.**
*As a group, pretend to wash your hands. Prompt the children or young adults to turn on warm water, wet hands, apply soap, lather soap, get soap on both sides of hands and in between fingers, rinse hands, and dry hands. Consider singing the ABCs or Happy Birthday in the period between when they have applied soap and when they rinse the soap off.*

If a child or young adult does not respond well to their hands being wet, you can demonstrate the appropriate use of hand sanitizer (use scent-free when possible, knowing hand sanitizer can have a strong smell):
1. Dispense a dime-sized amount of hand sanitizer in the child or young adult’s hand.
2. Demonstrate rubbing your hands together and have the child or young adult copy you.
KEY POINTS:

• Avoid eating too many sugary, sweet foods. These foods can cause cavities.
• If you do not remove the sugary, sweet foods that stick to your teeth, mouth germs will grow and plaque will form. Sugary foods, mouth germs and plaque cause cavities.
• Mouth germs can spread from one person to another by sharing drinking glasses, water bottles or toothbrushes. Do not share drinking glasses, water bottles or toothbrushes.

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS:

• Children and young adults with special needs may still soothe themselves by sucking or gnawing on fingers. This is a mode of germ transmission; therefore, revisiting hand washing and/or hand sanitizing may be important in this lesson.
• It will be important to stress not sharing drinking glasses, straws, toothbrushes, water bottles or items the child or young adult uses for self-soothing to ensure germs are not transferred to others or from others.

LESSON SCRIPT:

We have already talked about germs. We learned that the best way to prevent germs from spreading is by washing (or sanitizing) our hands. 

*Consider reviewing any other main points from the Hand Washing Lesson.*

Did you know that we have germs in our mouth? It seems kind of funny, but it is true. There are germs—or bacteria—in our mouth that cause cavities.

Part 1: How do germs cause cavities?

1. The germs in our mouth are fueled by sugary and sweet foods. If we eat a lot of sugary foods, the germs and bacteria in our mouth will grow.
2. These germs will form plaque and acids and cause cavities.

Part 2: How can we prevent mouth germs from spreading or causing cavities? We are going to learn about two things we can do to prevent the mouth germs from causing cavities.

1. **Brush your teeth.**
   • **Brushing teeth twice a day will remove germs.**
   *Consider reviewing any main points from the Brushing Lesson.*

2. **Do not share drinking glasses, water bottles, or tooth brushes with friends or family.**
• Anytime that we drink from a glass or a water bottle, we leave some of our mouth germs behind.
• If we share drinking glasses or water bottles, we are sharing germs.
• We should wash drinking glasses or water bottles after using them.

Now we have learned a few ways that we can prevent germs from spreading and growing. Can you remember what they are?

*See if children and young adults can recall:*

1. Wash your hands.
2. Brush your teeth.
3. Avoid sharing drinking glasses/water bottles/straws/toothbrushes.
Nutrition for Healthy Teeth
Supplement for Children and Young Adults with Special Needs

KEY POINTS:

- Sugary foods and snacks are not “tooth friendly” because they stick to teeth and help cavities form.
- “Tooth friendly” snacks, such as fruits and vegetables, will not stick teeth. They do not cause cavities.

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS:

- Depending on individual needs, children and young adults may need to use a desensitizing technique in order to learn about tooth friendly foods. Suggest they sniff a food to see if they like the way it smells, then lick it, as opposed to taking a whole bite. Strong flavors, like that of toothpaste or rinse, can be jarring to a child with special needs.

LESSON SCRIPT:

Part 1: What foods make my teeth unhealthy and weak?
Foods and drinks that are sugary and sweet can make your teeth unhealthy and weak. Can you think of a few foods that are sugary and sweet?
Allow children and young adults to respond with a few ideas of sugary/sweet foods.

Very good. Foods like ice cream, cookies, cake, soda, and juice are all sugary and sweet. These foods can make our teeth unhealthy and weak.
Optional: Show children and young adults pictures of a few sugary/sweet foods.

Now that we have named a few foods and drinks that make our teeth unhealthy, let’s learn why these foods make our teeth unhealthy.

All of these foods (optional: hold up pictures of the sugary/sweet foods) are not “tooth friendly” because they contain a lot of sugar.

Sugar in sweet foods sticks to our teeth. Bacteria and germs like sugar and will grow on our teeth wherever there is sugar.

After a while, all of the bacteria and germs group together to form plaque. Plaque will harden on teeth and form acid. Acid makes teeth weak. When teeth are weak they may get holes in them. These holes are called cavities. When cavities form, they can be painful.
Do you think this means we should never eat anything sweet and sugary?
Allow children and young adults to respond.

We certainly can still enjoy sweet treats, like ice cream or cake. However, there are a few things we can do to prevent sugar from these sweet treats from sticking to our teeth and forming cavities.
1. Brush your teeth right after eating something sweet. Brushing your teeth helps remove the sugar that sticks to your teeth.  
Optional: Review a few key points from the Brushing Lesson

Now, what if you eat a sweet treat when you are at school or playing with a friend? You might not have a toothbrush with you!

2. If you can’t brush your teeth, use your tongue to help prevent the sugar from sticking to your teeth.  
Exaggerate moving your tongue against your teeth to show children and young adults. Give children and young adults time to practice.

3. Drink water! Drinking water can help remove some of the sugar stuck to your teeth.

Part 2: What foods and drinks make my teeth healthy and strong?
We have already learned that sweet and sugary foods make our teeth unhealthy and weak. Do you think that all foods make our teeth unhealthy?  
Allow children and young adults to respond.

There are many foods that help teeth be healthy. Let’s talk about a few.
Optional: Hold up pictures of each type of food as you discuss them.

Fruits and Vegetables
Fruits and vegetables are “tooth friendly” because they do not have processed sugar that sticks to teeth.

Foods with Calcium~ Milk and Cheese
Calcium helps make our bones strong. It also helps make our teeth strong. Milk and cheese both have calcium.

Foods with Vitamin D~ Eggs and Fish
In order for calcium to help make our teeth strong, it needs help from Vitamin D! Eggs and fish both have the vitamin D that our teeth need!

Water!
The best drink for our teeth is not juice or soda, but water! It's a good idea to drink water during the day.

Now we have learned two types of foods: foods that are “tooth friendly” and foods that are not “tooth friendly.”  
Hold up pictures of different foods and have the children and young adults respond “yes” or “no” as you ask whether the food is “tooth friendly” or not.
The following Supplemental Resources are available at your America’s ToothFairy User Portal

ToothFairy 101 Kids’ Activity Handouts (7 Page Packet)
- Smile-Friendly Foods Coloring Sheet
- Draw Your Own SuperTooth
- Toothbrushing Chart

ToothFairy 101 Additional Handouts
- Toothbrushing Chart (Spanish)
- ToothFairy Door Hanger
- ToothFairy Door Hanger (Spanish)
- Tale of the ToothFairy
- Tips from the ToothFairy Kid Activity Cards
- Tips from the ToothFairy for Parents
- Tips from the ToothFairy for Parents (Spanish)
- Tips form the ToothFairy Parent Activity Cards
- Tips from the ToothFairy for Special Needs Youth

Community Education Resource Packet
This Packet reflects a collaboration between America’s ToothFairy and ToothFairy Island. It contains lessons, activities, and printable handouts. Most of the lessons are specific to the ToothFairy Island Magnetic Board.
- Lesson- Good Oral Health Habits for You and Your Baby
- Lesson - Your Baby’s Oral Health
- Activities - Toothbrushing
- Lesson - Flossing
- Lesson - Germ Transmission
- Lesson - Hand Washing
- Lesson - Toothfriendly Snacks
- Lesson - Acid Mouth
- Lesson - Biofilm
- Lesson: Keep Your Teeth and the Metal in Your Mouth Clean for a Cool, Straight Smile!
- Lesson: Mouth Safety/ Mouthguards
- Lesson: Tongue Piercing
- Lesson: How Tobacco and Other Drugs Negatively Affect Your Mouth and Teeth
Tips from the ToothFairy for Children and Young Adults with Special Needs

Follow these simple tips to enjoy a healthy, pain-free smile every day of the year!

1. Demonstrate essential tools needed for at-home dental brushings, flossing and rinsing, such as a toothbrush, toothpaste and mouth rinse.

2. Make the purchase of dental products part of the introductory process to an oral healthcare routine. Showing an individual with special needs where the dental tools needed are purchased and the variety of products, helps individualize the process and make it fun.

3. Invest in a new toothbrush at least every three months and after every illness to avoid lingering bacteria and germs.

4. Help establish a daily routine for dental care. Allow for appropriate tools to be easily accessed and for time to be available to ease the development of a daily habit of dental hygiene.

5. Choosing the right tools for each person’s mouth depends on their comfort level with brushing and flossing. Special attention should be given to the current condition of the individual’s mouth and choose the brush and brush typed necessary to meet a child’s needs.

6. Informing your dental professional ahead of time of any sensory issues is encouraged so your dentist gains a better understanding of the child or young adult’s needs. A casual office visit before treatment is encouraged to help understand what happens at the dentist’s office.

7. Flavors in toothpaste and mouth rinses may be overwhelming to some. Experiment until you find a favorable one. For mouth rinse, dip a toothbrush in the rinse and then, brush gently onto teeth. Swishing and spitting may be difficult for some individuals to do or maneuver.

8. Determine the treatment seating arrangement in your dentist’s office prior to your first visit to ensure physical needs can be accommodated.

9. Avoid spreading harmful germs by encouraging regular hand washing and/or carrying of hand sanitizer if an individual is comfortable with soap and water.

10. If tooth trauma should occur, try to apply gentle pressure to keep tooth in tact or take the tooth with you right away to an emergency dental clinic.

11. Check out products with xylitol (i.e. chewing gum, lollipops, etc.) as an alternative to sugar-laden sweets!

12. And, of course, brush and floss your teeth twice a day and visit your dentist once every six months! For individuals ages 6 and up, use a fluoride rinse.

Visit www.AmericasToothFairy.org