

Lesson 8 My teeth

Objective

- To know the different types of teeth and their functions.

Vocabulary

biting, canines, cutting, grinding, incisors, molars, premolars, tearing

RESOURCES

Main activity: Illustrations or models of teeth, hard fruits such as apples and pears.

Group activities: 1 Mirrors, copies of photocopiable page 30 (also 'My teeth' (red), available on the CD-ROM). **2** Secondary sources of information about ourselves, food and teeth - books, videos, CD-ROMs, the internet; paper, pens and pencils.

ICT link: 'My teeth' interactive activity from the CD-ROM.

PREPARATION

Cut up fruit into small portions.

BACKGROUND

The hardest part of the human body is the surface of the teeth. Made from enamel, this surface protects the teeth from being worn away and attacked by chemicals. Teeth play a vital role in the initial stages of food digestion in that, before it is swallowed, food is chewed. Most mammals have specialised teeth that are shaped in particular ways to carry out different tasks. Teeth are used to bite food, break it up and grind it into small pieces. Humans are omnivores (we eat both plants and animals as food), and our teeth are capable of eating both, unlike some other animals. Carnivores (or meat-eaters) have teeth suited to killing other animals and tearing their flesh, whereas herbivores (plant-eaters) have teeth more suited to eating vegetation. As humans we have different types of teeth, each of which has a different function.

Human babies are generally born without teeth and by the age of one their milk teeth have appeared. Between the ages of six and twelve these milk teeth are replaced by permanent teeth. The table below shows how many of each teeth we usually have.

We lose our milk teeth as we grow, but we can also lose our permanent teeth for a variety of reasons - through injury, gum disease or tooth decay. It is important, though, that we maintain healthy teeth for as long as possible, so that we can chew properly and also be spared the pain of a

Tooth type	Shape	Function
Incisors	Sharp, chisel shape	Biting off food, cutting food
Canines	Sharp pointed shape	Biting off food, tearing food
Molars	Cube shape	Grinding, chewing and crushing food

decaying tooth. Most adults have 32 teeth in their second, or permanent, set. These consist of: eight incisors, four canines, eight premolars and twelve molars.

The part of the tooth that you can see is the crown, which is about half of the full tooth. The crown is covered with enamel, below which is a layer of dentine. The centre of the tooth is filled with a soft pulp which contains the blood supply and nerve endings. Long roots anchor the tooth to the jaw.

Age	Tooth set	Tooth type	Number	Total
Birth	None			
1 year	Milk teeth	Incisors Canines Premolars	8 4 8	20
6-12 Adults	Permanent	Incisors Canines Premolars Molars	8 4 8 12	32

STARTER

Ask the children to think about what they use when they are eating. Bring the discussion around to how they use their teeth.