

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Teeth

I am sure you know why God has given you teeth. Your poor tummy would have a hard job to digest your food if you had to swallow it all whole! Your teeth prepare your food for digestion by breaking it up. But did you know that your teeth also help you to talk? Sounds such as *th* and *v* are made using the teeth.

Experiment and say these two sounds now. You will feel your tongue touch your upper front teeth as you say *th* and your lower lip touch your upper teeth as you say *v*.

Not only do you need your teeth to talk properly but they also help to give a pleasant shape to your face.

A baby is born without teeth of course. A baby's teeth start to appear when he is about six months old. These are called milk teeth and there are twenty of them. When a child reaches about six years of age the milk teeth start to come out and the permanent teeth come through. We are given 32 permanent teeth.

Look in an encyclopaedia or similar book and find a diagram that shows you a cross section through a human tooth. Draw your own diagram in the space on the worksheet. Label the Dentine, Enamel and Pulp Cavity. Enamel is the hardest material in your body! Dentine is softer and in the very centre is the pulp cavity which contains blood vessels and nerves.

Our modern diet often includes very refined or processed foods and quite a lot of sugar. This is not good for teeth as food particles cling to them after we have finished our food. The food (especially if it is sugary) turns into a kind of acid that can cause teeth to decay. Here is an experiment that you can do that will show you what sugary things can do if they are left on your teeth.

You will need: two small jugs, two hard boiled eggs in their shells and some coca cola.

What to do: Fill a small jug with water and another with a coca cola. Place a hard-boiled egg into each jug. Leave the eggs overnight. The next day take out the eggs and look at them. Hmm...

Ask your mother to give you a demonstration of how to clean your teeth (did you know that you should gently brush your tongue too?) Ask her to tell you how long you should brush for, how you should brush and to give you some tips for not missing out any parts of your mouth. As a special experiment, if your mother allows, you may use *disclosing tablets* which will show you whether or not you have missed any teeth!

There is more to cleaning your teeth than you might think. If you do not clean your teeth and gums regularly and properly, they will be attacked by periodontal disease. At first this disease has no symptoms, that means you do not know you have it! In the blood vessels throughout your body there is a protein that is similar to that found in periodontal disease bacteria. While the bacteria are in your mouth, your body gives off a chemical to attack the periodontal disease. This chemical then attacks the protein in the blood vessels! This causes a deposit to build up in your arteries. These deposits are fatty substances which break off the lining of the blood vessels. They can then travel to