



# CLASSROOM TOOTHBRUSHING TOOLKIT





# WHY BRUSH AT SCHOOL?



Good oral hygiene can prevent tooth pain that impacts the ability to learn and concentrate.<sup>1</sup>



Daily oral hygiene develops a smile children can be proud of, which can foster confidence and positive self-esteem.<sup>2</sup>

Toothbrushing in the classroom teaches children the skills they need to take care of their own teeth and gums for a lifetime.



Chronic oral infections during childhood can increase the risk of atherosclerosis, or hardening and thickening of the arteries.<sup>3</sup>

1. Jackson SL, Vann WF, Kotch JB, Pahel BT, Lee JY. Impact of poor oral health on children's school attendance and performance. *Am J Public Health* 2011;101:1900-6

2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2000. *Healthy People 2010 Objectives for Improving Health: Focus Area 21--Oral Health*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

3. Pussinen PJ, Paju S, Koponen J, Viikari JSA, Taittonen L, Laitinen T, Burgner DP, Kähönen M, Hutri-Kähönen N, Raitakari OT, Juonala M. Association of Childhood Oral Infections With Cardiovascular Risk Factors and Subclinical Atherosclerosis in Adulthood. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2019 Apr 5



# TOOTHBRUSHING MATERIALS



To maximize program success, it's helpful to have the following materials on hand:

- **Toothbrushes for each student**
- **Toothbrush storage area/container**
- **Toothpaste**
- **Disposable cups**
- **Napkins**
- **Hand soap & water or hand sanitizer**
- **Gloves**
- **Disinfectant wipes or spray**
- **Trash can**
- **Tray**

## ACCESSIBLE TOOTHBRUSHING MATERIALS

Differently abled and neurodiverse students may benefit from using:

- **3-sided toothbrushes**
- **Large-handled toothbrushes**
- **Electric or battery-powered toothbrushes**
- **Flavor-free toothpaste**



# TOOTHBRUSHING PROCEDURE

-  Toothbrushing is scheduled at least once daily.
-  Each student has their own soft-bristled toothbrush labeled with their name.
-  Teacher/assistant and student wash their hands with soap and water before and after brushing. If soap and water are unavailable, hands are cleaned with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
-  Gloves should be worn by anyone assisting students with brushing and should be changed between each student.
-  Teacher demonstrates proper brushing technique on tooth model while students are brushing. Visual timers can be used to encourage students to brush for full 2 minute duration.

**Brushing takes  
place in the  
classroom with  
children seated at  
desks or tables**

- 1. A pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste is dispensed on the rims of disposable cups.**
- 2. Students use toothbrush to scoop paste from cup rim.**
- 3. Paper towels or napkins are provided to each student.**
- 4. After brushing, students spit remaining toothpaste in paper cup (do not rinse), wipe mouths with napkin, and place napkin inside paper cup**
- 5. Paper cup containing waste is thrown away**

-  After brushing, teacher/assistant or student rinses each brush - carefully so that brushes do not touch each other - and stores in a holder that allows brushes to air dry in an upright position without touching each other.
-  Sink is disinfected after all toothbrushes are rinsed and put away.



**For maximum benefit, brush for 2 minutes!**



# SAFETY & SANITATION GUIDELINES



## PROCESS

- Teacher/assistant and students should wash their hands with soap and water before and after toothbrushing. If soap and water are unavailable, hands should be cleaned with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- If the teacher/assistant directly assists with toothbrushing, gloves should be worn. Gloves should be replaced after assisting each student.
- To avoid cross contamination, toothpaste should never be applied directly from the tube to the toothbrush. Toothpaste should be dispensed onto the rim of a disposable cup for each student. The student will sweep the toothpaste from the cup onto the toothbrush.

## CLASSROOM/ ENVIRONMENT

- Tables should be disinfected before and after toothbrushing.
- Sinks should be disinfected after all toothbrushes have been rinsed.
- Students should avoid placing toothbrushes directly on the classroom table, desk, or other surface
- Students should avoid playing with the toothbrush.
- Toothbrush container/holder should be washed and disinfected at the end of every week using a disinfectant solution.

## TOOTHBRUSHES

- Each child receives a soft-bristled, appropriately-sized toothbrush.
- Toothbrushes are labeled with student names.
- Toothbrushes are never shared.
- Toothbrushes are never disinfected with bleach or run through the dishwasher. If available, a UV toothbrush sanitizer may be used.
- Toothbrushes are stored in a container that allows air drying but does not allow brushes to touch.
- Toothbrushes are replaced when:
  - Bristles become bent or frayed,
  - An illness is passing through the classroom
  - When contaminated/dropped on floor
  - They have been in use for 3 months

# READINESS ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Ready to implement toothbrushing program at your school?

To maximize success, it's helpful to have the following elements in place:

- Administrator buy-in**
- Teacher buy-in**
- Parent buy-in**
- Wellness Committee buy-in**
- Necessary materials**
- Funding to purchase necessary materials**
- Dedicated time & space**
- Adaptability & willingness to learn over time**



# RESOURCES



## Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation

Find funding opportunities at:

- [www.deltadentalar.com/giving-back/delta-dental-of-arkansas-foundation/funding-opportunities](http://www.deltadentalar.com/giving-back/delta-dental-of-arkansas-foundation/funding-opportunities)



## ADH Office of Oral Health

Find oral health information or request technical assistance at:

- [adh.ooh@arkansas.gov](mailto:adh.ooh@arkansas.gov)



## American Dental Association<sup>®</sup> mouthhealthy<sup>™</sup>

- [www.mouthhealthy.org](http://www.mouthhealthy.org)



# RESOURCES

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Below are some examples of items described in the Toolkit.



3-Sided Toothbrush



Electric Toothbrush



Toothbrush  
Container



Toothpaste  
dispensed on rim of  
disposable cup

