

TEETH AND GUMS

ACTIVITIES FOR TEETH AND GUMS SECTION

Using text books from your classroom or library, discuss the proper care for teeth and gums.

OPTIONS

Invite a Dental Health Care professional to instruct students on proper care of teeth and gums. Information could be given on Orthodontics, or dental cosmetics.

ABOUT TEETH

During our lifetime we have two sets of teeth, the milk teeth or the temporary set of 20 teeth which serves only a few years until the 32 permanent teeth that their place, 16 in the upper and 16 in the lower jaw.

A **tooth** is made up of a crown or the part projecting above the gum, next to the crown is a narrow part called the neck of the tooth, and the tapering ends are called the roots which are secured in the gum.

Running through the center of the root and into the crown of the tooth is a tiny canal that contains the pulp of the tooth, which consists of blood vessels and nerves. The tooth structure consists of bone or dentine which in the crown is covered with a layer of hard enamel, while the root is covered with a cement-like bone substance.

Good general nutrition, good care of the general health and good dental care will prevent all tooth trouble. Tartar deposits on the teeth, if permitted to accumulate, will in time cause a separation of the edge of the gums from the teeth, and produce irritation, inflammation and infection of the gums and teeth. Careful brushing and cleaning of the teeth daily will help avoid this tartar buildup. Periodic cleaning by the dentist will remove the tartar and help to prevent a large buildup.

Tooth decay, often caused by improper cleaning after eating, works into the enamel of the tooth. This decay, unless taken care of by a dentist, will continue to eat away at the tooth until the tooth becomes infected and may have to be removed.

The **gum** is the tissue surrounding the base of the teeth. The gums should be kept in a healthy state by an adequate diet containing all the necessary vitamins, especially Vitamin C. Extreme lack of Vitamin C causes "scurvy" in which the gums become inflamed, swollen and bleeding. With proper care teeth can last a lifetime.