

DentaQuest®

Early Learning Oral Health Curriculum

A fun and interactive way to introduce oral health to early learners





Dear Early Childhood Educators,

Tooth decay is the single most common chronic disease of childhood. It is highly prevalent and on the rise in preschool children and goes almost untreated in children under the age of 3. Children with poor oral health are 3x more likely to miss school due to dental pain alone. If left untreated, dental decay can cause a long list of other physical and developmental complications for children. The most important thing to note about tooth decay is that it is **100% preventable!**

As an Early Childhood Educator you have an important and wonderful opportunity to impress upon your students the importance of oral health at such a young age.

The curriculum below will allow you to discuss oral health in a simple, concise way using a relatively short period of time. The link to the Elmo video will help get the children excited about brushing their teeth and can be used before or after the classroom discussion. We have also included 3 separate classroom crafts and a list of books about teeth (by no means a comprehensive list but something to get you started), if you choose to add a literary component.

The coloring sheets, Brushing Calendar, Baby Teeth Matter Flyer, and Parent Letter have been designed to send home on the day the class learns about oral health. The goal of this packet is to get the entire family talking about oral health and encourage parents to set a good example by taking good care of their own mouth and being good examples in eating and drinking habits as well.

Thank you for allowing us to share this valuable information. Together we can help make a difference!

Best Wishes,
DentaQuest Outreach & Education Team

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Teaching Curriculum

Basic Talking Points for the Classroom:

Fun facts to share with kids about our teeth:

- Kids have 20 teeth total. 10 on top 10 on bottom. (Depending on age and eruption patterns most kids ages 2 to 5 will have 20 teeth total) Adults have 32 teeth. Fun fact: an alligator has about 80 teeth!
- What are our teeth made of?
 - Enamel, a super hard material that is stronger than our bones!
- What jobs do our teeth have?
 - Eating: teeth allow us to chew our food
 - Our teeth help us speak and pronounce words correctly
 - To give us have a beautiful smile and feel good about ourselves
 - Our primary teeth (baby teeth) help guide our permanent teeth into place

Taking care of our Teeth:

- Brushing and Flossing
 - We should always brush our teeth at least two times per day, once in the morning and again at night before we go to bed
 - We should floss one time per day. Everyone with teeth should floss!
 - Always have an adult help us brush and floss
 - Brush for 2 minutes each time – use a song or timer to help you keep track of the time
- Eat Healthy Foods – What you eat can impact the health of your teeth!
 - Choose to snack on healthy foods such as fresh vegetables and fruits, dairy products and lean meats. These are good for your teeth.
 - Drink lots of water – water straight from the tap is better than bottled water.
 - Don't eat or drink foods that have lots of sugar. Sugar can cause cavities, so be smart about what you are putting in your mouth. Avoid things like soda, sports drinks, sugary coffee drinks, candy and sweet pastries. Sticky candy is especially harmful. If you do eat something sugary, make sure you brush your teeth right after.
- Visit the Dentist
 - Visit the dentist every six months to make sure our teeth stay healthy
 - The dentist will help you take good care of your teeth and will be able to find any cavities before they develop into serious issues.

What happens if we don't take care of our teeth:

- If we don't brush and floss every day, bad germs will harm our teeth. Unless we brush them away, the germs sit on our teeth and can eat a hole in the outer layer of our teeth. This hole is called a cavity.

- A cavity damages our tooth, making our tooth sick. The tooth can hurt, and can be sensitive to hot and cold, and to sweets.
- If our tooth becomes sick we will need to visit the dentist to get it fixed.

Summary Notes:

- We all need to take good care of our teeth so they stay strong and healthy. We can do this by brushing twice a day, flossing daily and eating healthy foods. And avoid sugary food and drinks so the bad germs won't attack our teeth.

Tips for adding an oral health lesson to the classroom:

- Read a story book around oral health – 5-8 minutes
- Talk to the class about oral care, nutrition, and healthy habits. – 10-15 minutes
- Show an oral health centered video – use the Elmo link below, or another one - 10 minutes
- Oral Health activity – one of the activities found in this packet, or another one of your choosing – 15-25 minutes
- Introduce a brushing activity to your manipulative play station.
- Send home oral health information to the families
- Offer a parent education presentation after class hours - during parent council meetings or at back to school night, for example, or host a special educational event on oral health.
- Also keep in mind that there are many topics that can have an oral health component. Nutrition and diet, family role modeling, taking care of our bodies, and even smoking cessation all allow for the oral health topic to be tied into the discussion.

Link to Elmo brushing video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wxMrtK-kYnE>



Baby Teeth Matter! Cavities are fully preventable, and how you care for your child's baby teeth will impact their adult teeth. Start good oral care habits now!

- You can give your child a good start on the road to a healthy mouth. Baby teeth play an important part in helping your child maintain a healthy mouth and body.
- Baby teeth have to last a long time, until your child is around 10 years old.
- Baby teeth are important because they help your child:
 - **Chew**- Eat and digest healthy foods
 - **Talk**- Help your child to speak clearly
 - **Smile**- Feel good about themselves and have a beautiful smile
 - **Grow**-Hold important space for adult teeth to come in
- If baby teeth get cavities and are lost too soon it may cause crowding, cavities in permanent teeth or other serious problems. Follow these steps to help your child keep their baby teeth healthy:
 - Help your child brush his/her teeth 2 times a day using a small amount of toothpaste that contains fluoride.
 - Do not allow your child to fall asleep with a bottle or sippy cup that contains sugary drinks or milk, no matter their age. Use only plain water.
 - Make sure your entire family is eating right. Limit sugary foods and drinks, avoid all day eating habits and make sure to serve and eat foods that are good for your teeth like cheese, apples, and vegetables.
 - We all have bacteria in our mouth that can cause a cavity. Avoid sharing spoons, cups or toothbrushes with your child.
 - Keep your own mouth healthy by brushing and flossing daily- set a good example for your family
 - Make sure your family members all visit the dentist every 6 months. Your child should have their first dental visit no later than age 1.

Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) provides dental benefits for enrolled members. Children enrolled in the full state plan have comprehensive dental benefits, with no co-pays or annual fees. Adults enrolled in the full state plan have an annual dental benefit of \$1,000. If you would like more information about Health First Colorado Dental benefits, or would like help finding a dental care provider near you, please call DentaQuest's toll-free member support line: 1-855-225-1729



Dental Health Week

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This week we have been learning about our teeth. We learned how many teeth we have, what we use our teeth for and how to take good care of them. We also talked about what kinds of food are good for our teeth. We also put together a fun craft.

Please help us by talking about oral health at home. Ask your child questions about what they learned and be excited about the things they share with you. We have included a brushing calendar to help with daily brushing and a flyer about baby teeth.

Health First Colorado (Colorado's Medicaid Program) provides dental care benefits for both children and adults. If you are a Health First Colorado Member and need help finding a dental care provider, or have questions about your dental benefits, call the **DentaQuest Member Support Line: 855-225-1729**

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Book List

1. Arthur Tricks the Tooth Fairy, Author: Marc Tolon Brown
Jealous when Arthur loses a tooth and receives a quarter for it, his sister tries to trick the Tooth Fairy into also visiting her.
2. Pony Brush's his Teeth, Author: Michael Dahl
Pony eats a lot, and after he eats he always brushes his teeth.
3. Just Going to the Dentist, Author: Mercer Mayer
Little Critter goes to the dentist for a checkup, and finds that going to the dentist isn't so bad.
4. Kitanai and Cavity Croc brush their teeth, Author: Thomas Kingley Troupe
"Kitanai the dog teaches Cavity Croc how to keep teeth clean"—
5. I Know Why I Brush my Teeth, Author: Kate Rowan
Sam learns about his teeth and why it is important to keep them clean with regular brushing.
6. Caillou: I Can Brush My Teeth, Author: Sarah Margaret Johanson
Caillou brushes his teeth.
7. Clarabella's Teeth, Author: An Vrombaut
Clarabella the crocodile cannot play with her friends because she is busy brushing her teeth--and crocodiles have lots of teeth!
8. Danny Goes to the Dentist, Author: Robert Robinson
Danny and his sister go to the dentist and have their teeth checked.
9. Dear Dragon goes to the Dentist, Author: Margaret Hillert
"A boy and his pet dragon visit the dentist's office and learn about taking care of their teeth and being brave.
10. Buddy Loses a Tooth, Author: Grosset & Dunlap
Buddy loses his first tooth and travels to Rexville Station, where, with the help of Delores Tyrannosaurus, he learns all about dinosaur teeth.
11. The Tooth Book, Author: Theo LeSieg
Rhyming text and illustrations briefly point out what animals have teeth, their uses, and how to care for them.

12. How Many Teeth? Author: Paul Showers

Introduces teeth, describing how many we have at various stages of life, why they fall out, and what they do.

13. Brush, Brush, Brush!, Author: Alicia Padron/Children's Press

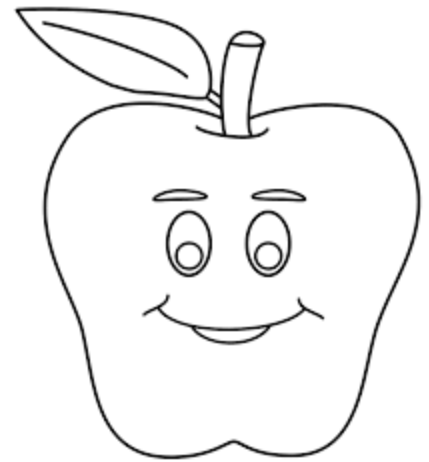
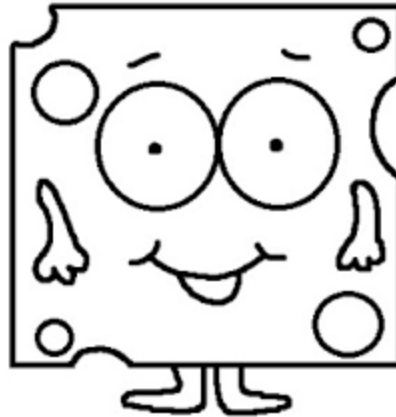
14. Does A Lion Brush?, Author: Fred Ehrlich

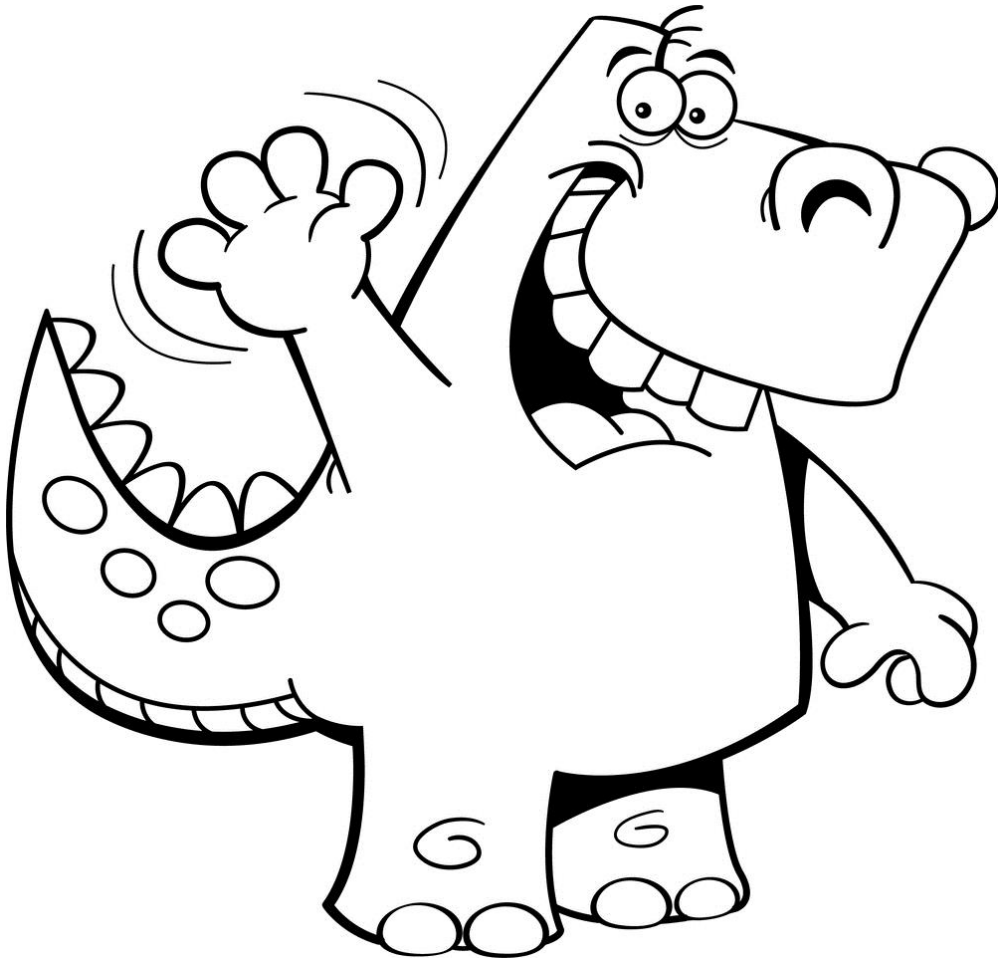
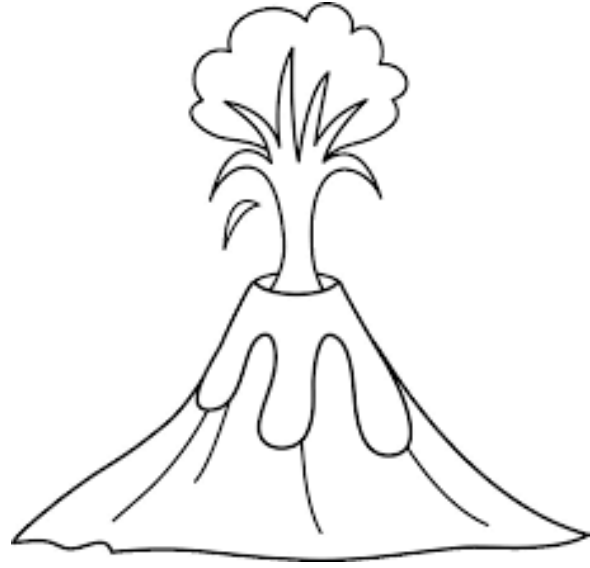
Although animals may not brush their teeth, children are told how and why they should

15. Anna Brush's Her Teeth, Author: Kathleen Amant

After getting ready for bed, Anna picks out the right toothbrush, has her mom add some toddler toothpaste, and brushes her teeth with mom's help, in this book that includes information for parents on helping children brush their teeth.

Eat Healthy Foods To Keep Teeth Healthy!







A HEALTHY SMILE IS NEVER OUT OF STYLE



MY BRUSHING CALENDAR

Put a check mark in each box when you brush twice each day!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 ✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 ✓ <input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Activity Sheet 1

Tooth Fairy Wand

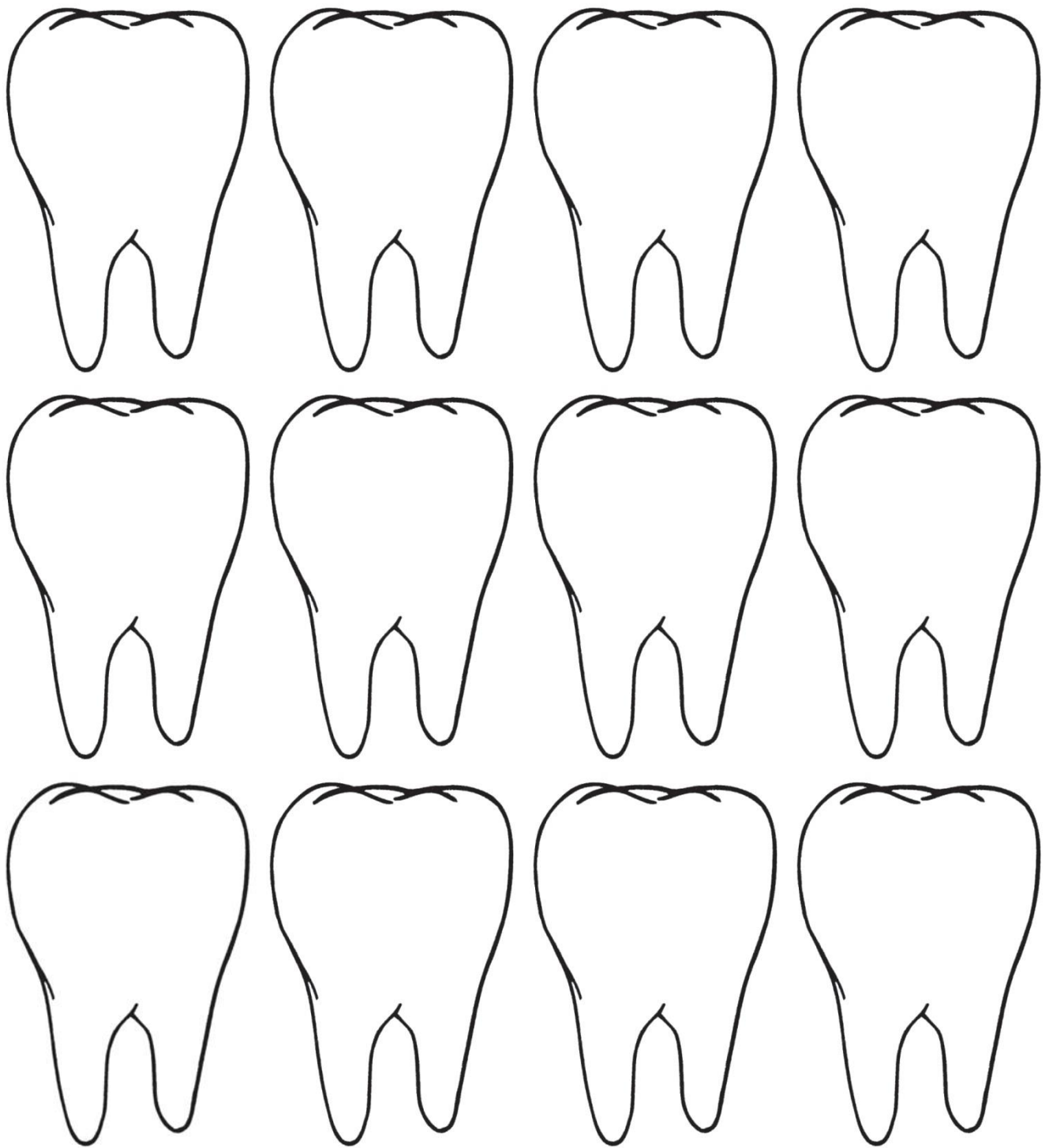


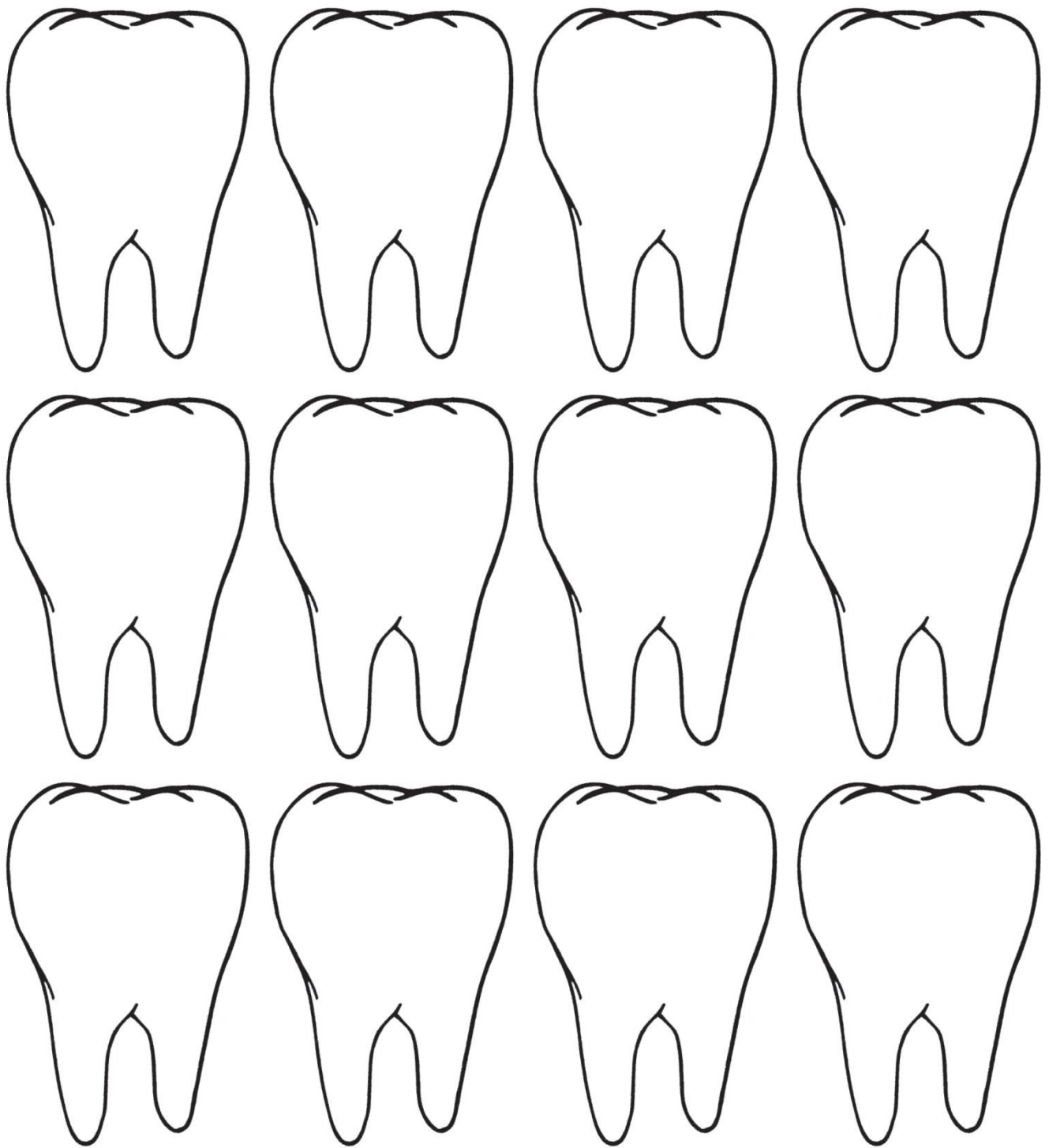
Materials:

- Festive paper drinking straws
- Thin ribbon – sparkly
- Tooth template, cut out (found below)
- Glue dots
- Clear packing tape
- Crayons/colored pencils etc

Instructions:

- Have children write their name or pick their favorite healthy food and draw it on the tooth (you can choose). Discuss why choosing healthy foods for our teeth are the best choice.
- “Laminate” the tooth with clear packing tape after the child is done drawing. Apply the glue dot to the back of the tooth and attach to the straw. Help child tie ribbon around straw.
- You're done! A fun festive tooth fairy wand!!





ACTIVITY SHEET 2

SMILEY MOUTH MASK

Supplies:

Red Construction Paper

Tongue Depressor

Marshmallows

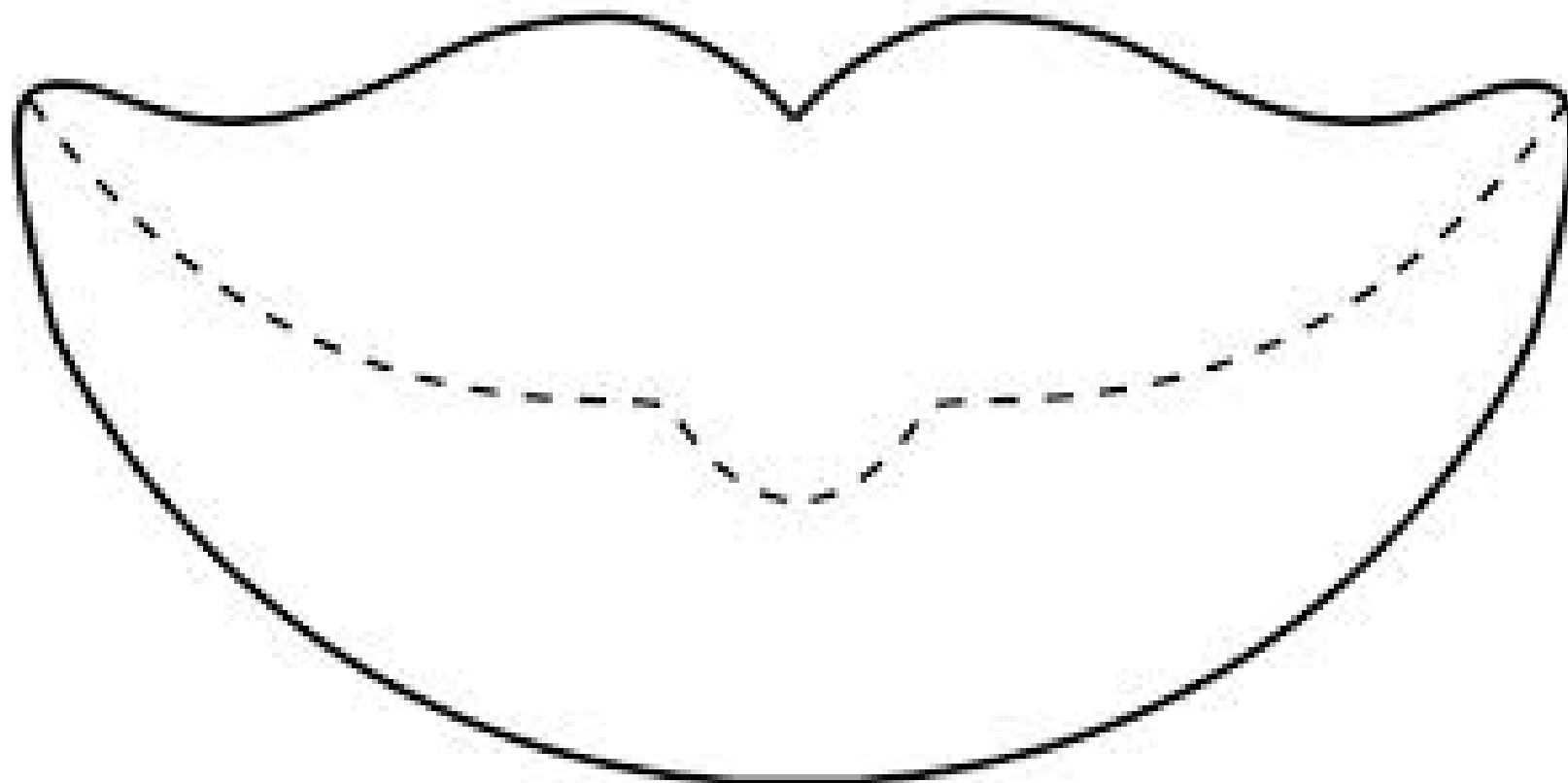
Directions:

Use template below to trace and cut out mouth onto red construction paper.

Have children glue 20 marshmallows (for teeth). 10 on top and 10 on bottom of mouth

Glue the tongue depressor to one side of the mouth for a handle.





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ACTIVITY SHEET 3

Soft Smiling Tooth

Supplies:

Tooth Template (below)

Cotton Balls

Directions:

Use template below to print tooth. Tooth can be cut out or used on full sheet of paper.

Have children draw a happy face on tooth and glue cotton balls on the tooth.



