

FROM DROOL TO SCHOOL



Caring for your child's oral health from
the drool years through the school years

Brought to you by:

Delta Dental Foundation

An affiliate of Delta Dental of Michigan,
Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina

DELTA DENTAL FOUNDATION




Your child's oral health is important!

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease in the U.S. (five times more common than asthma), and children miss more than 51 million hours of school each year due to dental-related illnesses—most of which can be prevented.¹ Children with dental problems have trouble smiling, eating, sleeping, concentrating and learning in school. That's why it's never too early to start developing good oral health habits.

This booklet was created to help you learn more about how to take care of your child's oral health from birth through the elementary school years. Not only will you find helpful information, tips and resources, but we've also included some fun kids' activities so that you and your child can learn about the importance of good oral health together.

For more oral health resources, information about how to find and pay for dental care, and to watch a cool four-minute oral health video that you and your child will love, check out the resources section in the back of this book or visit your state's Delta Dental website.

Jed J. Jacobson, DDS, MS, MPH



Chief Science Officer,
Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina

Michigan: www.deltadentalmi.com
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Ohio: www.deltadentaloh.com
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THE DROOL YEARS
Newborns and Infants

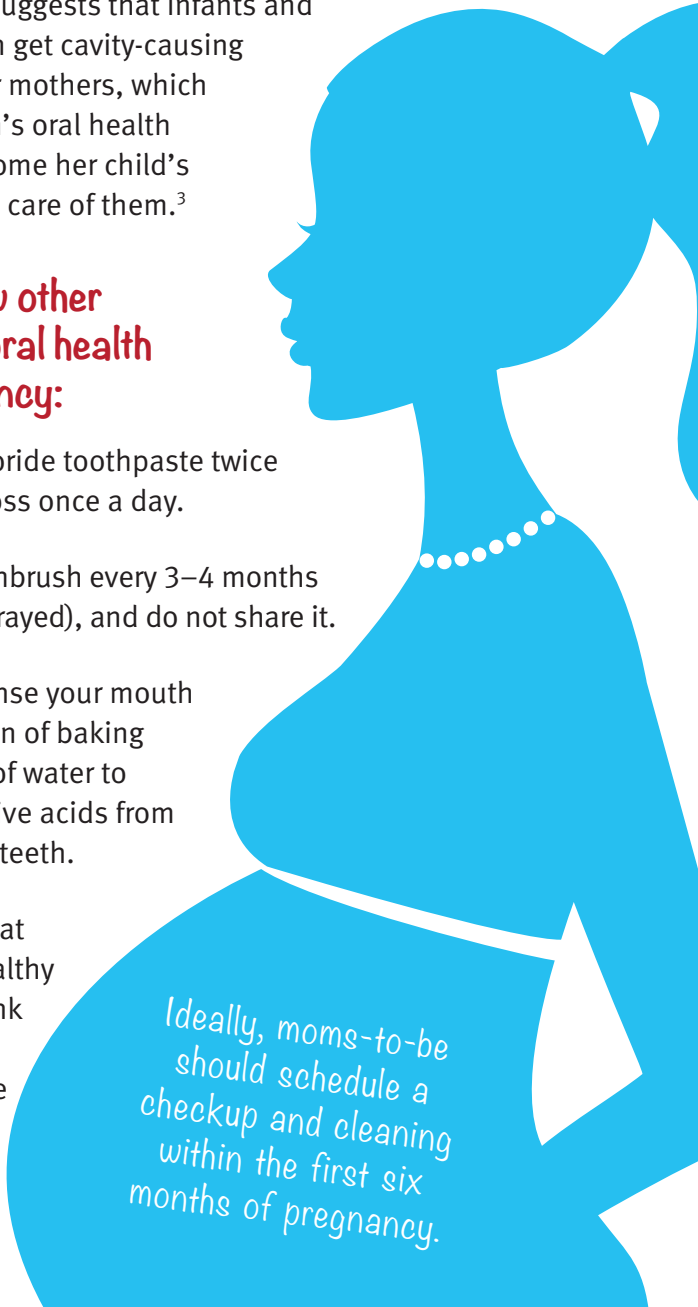




A mom's oral health may affect her baby even before it's born. Studies show that gum disease could be a risk factor for pre-term, low birth weight babies.² Further, research suggests that infants and young children can get cavity-causing bacteria from their mothers, which means that a mom's oral health problems can become her child's if she doesn't take care of them.³

Here are a few other tips for good oral health during pregnancy:

- Brush with fluoride toothpaste twice per day and floss once a day.
- Get a new toothbrush every 3–4 months (more often if frayed), and do not share it.
- If you vomit, rinse your mouth with a teaspoon of baking soda in a cup of water to prevent digestive acids from attacking your teeth.
- Make sure to eat a variety of healthy foods, and drink water or milk instead of juice or soda pop.



Ideally, moms-to-be should schedule a checkup and cleaning within the first six months of pregnancy.



BEFORE TEETH EVEN APPEAR

Even though you can't see them, all 20 primary (baby) teeth are present in the jaws at birth. As a result, good oral health habits should start before a baby's first tooth even appears.

Start off right:



- **Massage baby's gums.** Take a damp washcloth and lightly rub/massage your baby's gums after each feeding to keep the mouth and gums clean and healthy.
- **Keep an eye on pacifiers and bottles.** Talk to your dentist about which type of bottle nipples he/she recommends because they can affect how muscles develop in a baby's mouth.
- **Stop the spread of germs.** Don't share your cups or silverware with your baby. Sharing not only spreads germs that cause illness, but also cavity-causing bacteria.



Teething usually starts at around 6 months of age when the front four teeth usually push through the gums. However, some babies may not get a first tooth until 12 or 14 months.

During teething, babies may begin to drool more heavily and become fussy due to sore or tender gums.

To ease your baby's tender gums:

- Lightly massage sore gums with moist gauze or a clean finger.
- Try offering cool relief like a teething ring or the back of a small spoon dipped in cool water or a cool, wet washcloth.
- Brush gums and teeth gently with a child-sized soft toothbrush and water.

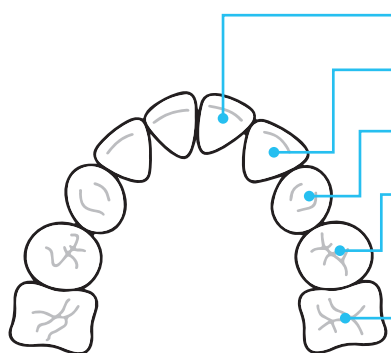
A stylized green baby stroller with a canopy and two large wheels. The text is written inside the stroller's body.

During teething time, a baby is more likely to bite or gnaw on small objects. Be sure not to give your baby any toys or items that could break or fall apart as pieces could cause choking.



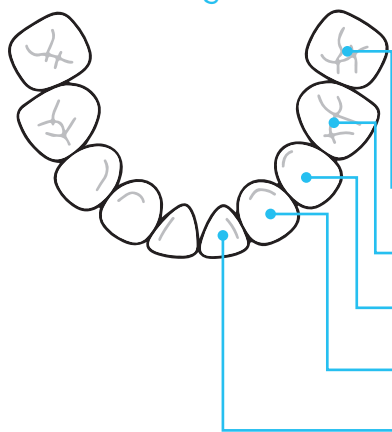
TEETHING CHART

When do certain baby teeth start showing up in a child's mouth? Use the chart below to help keep track of when new baby teeth should be arriving.



Baby Teeth		
Upper Teeth	Come In	Fall Out
Central Incisor	8–12 mos.	6–7 yrs.
Lateral Incisor	9–13 mos.	7–8 yrs.
Canine (Cuspid)	16–22 mos.	10–12 yrs.
First Molar	13–19 mos.	9–11 yrs.
Second Molar	22–33 mos.	10–12 yrs.

20 baby teeth



Baby Teeth		
Lower Teeth	Come In	Fall Out
Second Molar	23–31 mos.	10–12 yrs.
First Molar	14–18 mos.	9–11 yrs.
Canine (Cuspid)	17–23 mos.	9–12 yrs.
Lateral Incisor	10–16 mos.	7–8 yrs.
Central Incisor	6–10 mos.	6–7 yrs.



Why so early?

By visiting the dentist early, your child can get to know the dentist, and the dentist will be able to learn about your child's dental needs before problems occur. Your child will feel better about the dentist if the first visit is a positive, happy experience as opposed to one that is scary or for a painful emergency.

What kind of dentist should a child see?

Most often, young children will see either a pediatric dentist or a family dentist. A pediatric dentist is a dentist that has been specially trained to see children of all ages. A family dentist may see children as well as older family members, such as parents or grandparents. The choice is up to you.

To find a kid-friendly dentist in your area, visit the website of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry at www.aapd.org, or ask your pediatrician, co-workers or friends with young children for a referral.



What can you expect?

- The dentist will have you stay with your baby.
- The dentist will examine your baby's mouth.
- The dentist will talk with you.







Primary (baby) teeth are more important than you may think. They make space in the mouth for permanent (adult) teeth and can help children develop clear speech. Further, unhealthy baby teeth can spread bacteria to the healthy permanent teeth underneath.

It's important to teach about good brushing habits before your child's permanent teeth appear, and it's never too early to start!

Be sure to visit the dentist every year

Once children reach preschool age, it's time for them to visit the dentist at least once a year for a checkup. Believe it or not, more than 50 percent of 5- to 9-year-old children have at least one cavity or filling.¹ Good brushing habits and a yearly trip to the dentist can go a long way to preventing cavities.

To develop good brushing habits:

- Use a soft, child-sized toothbrush.
- Brush two times per day for two minutes.
- Brush in small, circular motions.
- Brush tongue to get rid of germs and freshen breath.
- Use fluoride toothpaste—start with a smear and increase as child ages.
- Remember: The last thing to touch your child's teeth before bedtime should be a toothbrush (not a snack)!

Floss once per day as soon as teeth start filling in next to each other.

Help with brushing and flossing, but not too much! When your child reaches preschool age, encourage him/her to brush while you watch.



I'M SCARED

Parents play a big role in making a visit to the dentist a good experience. In fact, according to a recent study, parents' fear of the dentist—especially dad's—can lead to their children being afraid of the dentist.⁴

To help the dental visit go more smoothly:

- Try not to show any fear about the dentist—kids have a way of picking up on what parents are feeling.
- Tell your child about his/her upcoming visit, but limit the details. Answer questions with simple answers, and leave the hard questions for the dentist to answer.

TIPS:

- Bring an extra diaper and a snack.
- Bring a favorite blanket and stuffed animal or other toy to help your toddler feel more comfortable and safe.
- A little fussing is OK—you'd be surprised how well most children handle their first visit.

- Don't use words like “hurt” or “shot” or “painful.”
- Don't tell your child about a bad dental visit you've had.
- Talk about the importance of healthy teeth and gums, and about the dentist as a friendly doctor whose job it is to help with this.

It's very normal for children to be afraid in a new situation. Dentists who treat children know just what to do to help them feel more relaxed and at ease.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT SUCKING



Sucking is natural, and lots of children suck on fingers, thumbs, pacifiers, baby bottles and other objects to relax or feel more secure. However, problems with tooth alignment and bite could result if sucking becomes a habit that goes on for too long.

- **Baby bottles**—Wean your child off the bottle at around 12 to 18 months of age. Kids that use bottles past this age are more likely to develop tooth decay and have a greater chance of becoming obese because they take in more calories.⁵
- **Pay attention to thumb sucking and pacifier use.** Though common in toddlers, if it continues after age 4, it can alter how your child's teeth and jaws develop.
- **Don't let kids carry around sippy cups full of sugary liquids.** While sippy cups are OK for toddlers, it's important that they not sip for long periods of time or be put down for a nap with a sippy cup containing juice, milk or other sweetened drinks because it can lead to cavities.

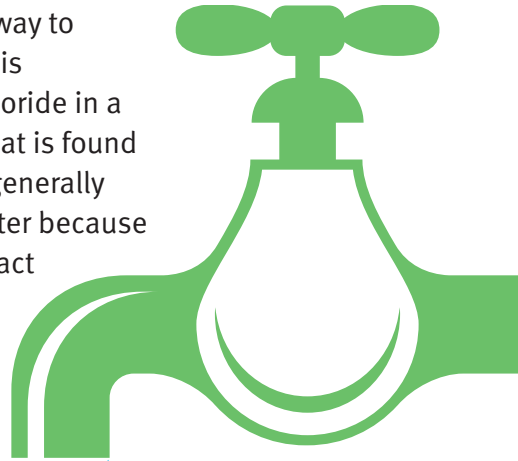




FABULOUS FLUORIDATED WATER

Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in many water sources, but levels can vary from place to place.

Drinking fluoridated water is a good way to fight tooth decay and cavities. Water is “fluoridated” when the amount of fluoride in a water system is adjusted to a level that is found to prevent tooth decay. Tap water is generally better for kids’ teeth than bottled water because it contains fluoride. Parents can contact their local health department to find out if their community’s water is fluoridated.



What makes fluoride so fabulous?

- *Fluoride serves as a shield on the outside of the teeth to keep acids from food and drinks from damaging teeth.*
- *Fluoride helps teeth repair themselves by helping the tooth enamel regain lost minerals.*



Eating right is important for a healthy body and mouth, and it's never too early to help your child learn good eating habits.

When deciding what to feed your hungry toddler or preschooler:

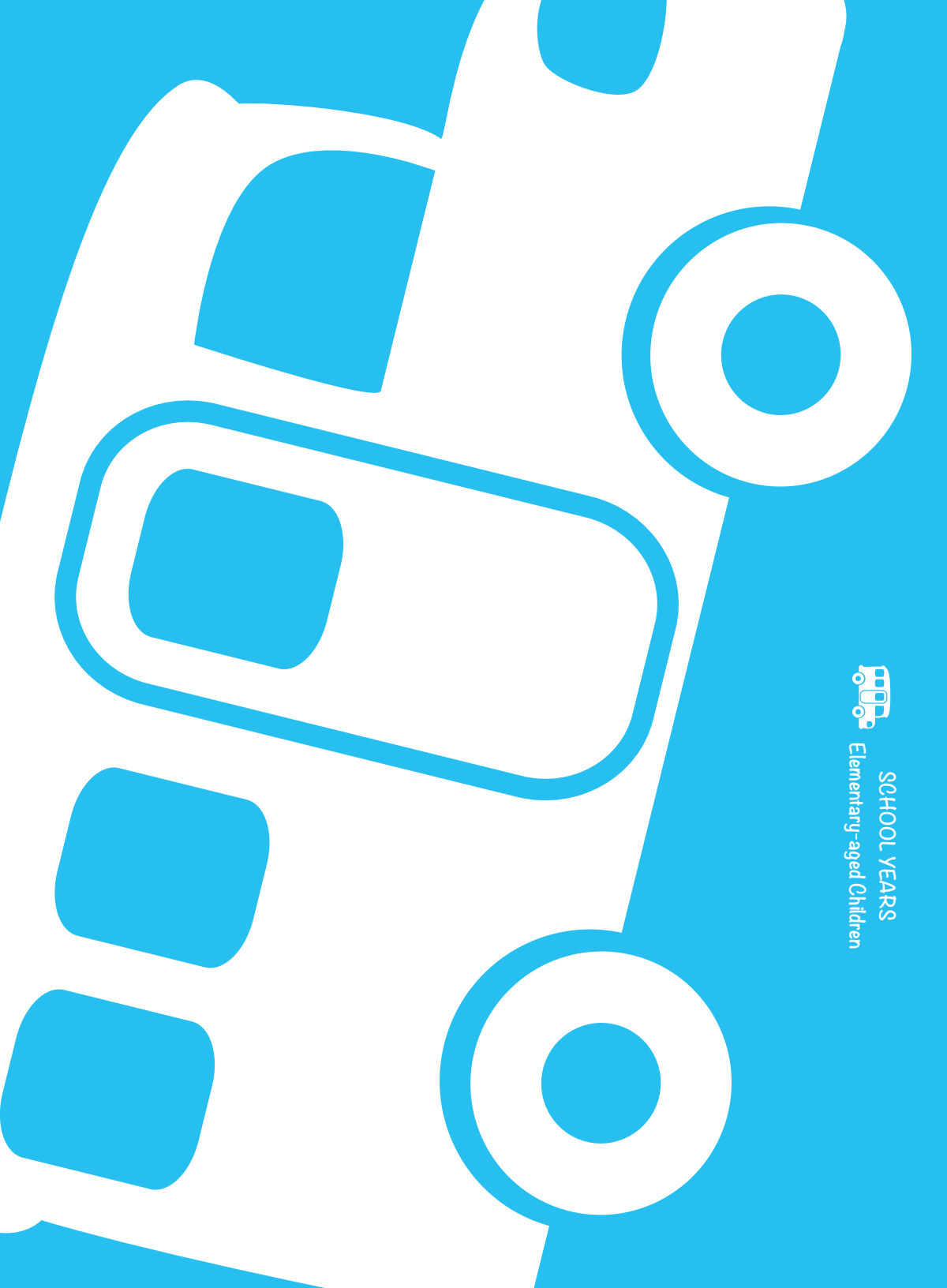
- **Limit snacks and read the labels.** Many snack foods are high in fat and calories and contain a lot of sugar which can cause cavities. Be sure to read labels and give your child healthy, low-fat snacks, such as cut up fruits and vegetables, cheese cubes, whole grain cereal and yogurt.
- **Swap soda pop and juice for milk and water.** Soda pop and fruit juice can contain a lot of sugar. The longer kids' teeth are exposed to this sugar, the more tooth decay can happen!
- **Choose foods rich in vitamins and calcium.** These help teeth and gums stay healthy and grow strong. Great examples of healthy snack options are fresh fruits and vegetables and dairy products such as low-fat yogurt and cheese.
- **Avoid chewy fruit snacks and sugared cereals.** Both of these items contain high levels of sugar that can lead to cavities. In addition, fruit snacks can stick to teeth and cause tooth decay.

Did you know?

Four grams of sugar is equal to one teaspoon!







SCHOOL YEARS
Elementary-aged Children



As children grow, they take great pride in doing things for themselves, including brushing and flossing on their own. However, it's still important for parents to keep an eye on these to make sure they are being done right!

Remember:

- **Brush twice a day for two minutes each time.** Brushing should take place in small circular motions across the teeth and gums. Lightly brushing the tongue can help get rid of bad breath.
- **Floss every day.** Teach kids to start in the same place.
- **Use a mouth rinse daily.** Swish the rinse in their mouths for between 30 and 60 seconds.

Brush

Two times per day, two minutes each time

Floss

One time every day

Rinse

Daily for 30–60 seconds



AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Sealants and fluoride treatments are easy, painless ways to help protect children's teeth from decay.

Sealants are thin plastic coatings that seal off the dips and grooves on the biting surface of back teeth (molars) so that germs and food can't get caught and cause decay.

Getting sealants is easy and painless. First, the tooth is cleaned and a special gel is put on it. Then the tooth is washed off and dried, and then the sealant is painted on the tooth. A light is shined onto the tooth to help the sealant harden. Sealants last for about 5 to 10 years, so check with your dentist to see when they need to be reapplied.⁶

Fluoride treatments help create a shield on teeth to stop the acids created by food and drinks from damaging them.

Check with your dentist to see what's best for your child!





Make a dental visit part of your child's back-to-school routine!

There are plenty of items to check off on the back-to-school list—school supply shopping, new clothes, doctor visits, haircuts, etc., but no back-to-school checklist should be complete without a visit to the dentist. **A dental checkup should be part of a child's back-to-school routine, along with immunizations and a yearly physical.** By making a dental visit part of your yearly school routine, it's easy to make sure your child's oral health is in top shape and that he/she is ready for the school year ahead.

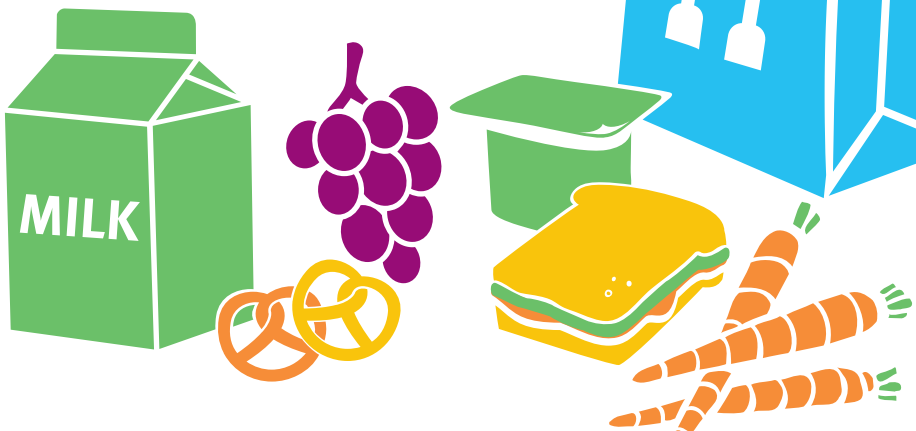




Packing a healthy school lunch for your child every morning can be tricky. A healthy, well-balanced lunch can help kids stay focused during the day and also help keep their teeth cavity free.

Make these a part of your child's school lunch:

- **Fresh fruits and vegetables**—Go for fresh, healthy options such as baby carrots, grapes, apple chunks and orange sections.
- **Dairy products**—Milk, low-fat yogurt and cheese are great choices. Be sure to read labels because some products that are specifically marketed to children can be high in fat and sugar.
- **Protein**—Turkey, roast beef, cheese or peanut butter are good choices for a sandwich. Use whole grain bread, and try to sneak in some lettuce and tomato!
- **Water**—Fluoridated water is a great choice for lunch. Drinks such as soda pop, juice and sports drinks can contain a lot of empty calories and high levels of sugar which can cause tooth decay.
- **Toothbrush**—Brushing after lunch is a great idea, but even a quick rinse with water can reduce the amount of sugar left behind on teeth.





Dental emergencies are very common among active kids. Be prepared for an emergency by keeping the phone number of your dentist handy.

If a tooth gets chipped, broken or knocked out, follow these steps:

- **Find all parts of the injured tooth** and only touch the top of the tooth.
- **Rinse the mouth** with warm water to remove broken tooth pieces.
- **If there is bleeding**, apply gauze to the area for about 10 minutes.
- **Do not clean or handle the tooth too much.**
- **Put the tooth back into the tooth socket**, if your child can hold it there without swallowing it. If not, put the tooth in a cup of milk to help prevent it from drying out.
- If the injury involves braces or wires, **cover broken or sharp parts** with cotton balls, gauze or dental wax.
- **Get to a dentist** as quickly as possible. A knocked-out tooth that has been out of the oral cavity and in a dry environment for greater than 60 minutes has no chance of survival.⁷

Primary tooth vs. permanent tooth

If your child knocks out a primary (baby) tooth, be sure to visit the dentist soon afterward to make sure there is no mouth damage or injury to the permanent tooth below the site of the baby tooth. In some cases, the dentist may recommend re-implanting the lost tooth.

Knocking out a permanent (adult) tooth is more serious. The quicker you can get to the dentist, the better chance of saving the tooth and re-implanting it in the mouth.



Playing sports is great for developing healthy bodies, but sometimes it's not so good for teeth. Mouth guards are a great way to protect teeth during sports.

Mouth guards come in three main types: stock, boil and bite, and custom-fit. You should talk to your dentist about which type is right for your child. You can find mouth guards at your local sporting goods store, but if you want a custom-fit mouth guard, it will have to be made by your child's dentist.

Be sure to teach your child how to take care of a mouth guard to make sure it is working right and isn't spreading germs:

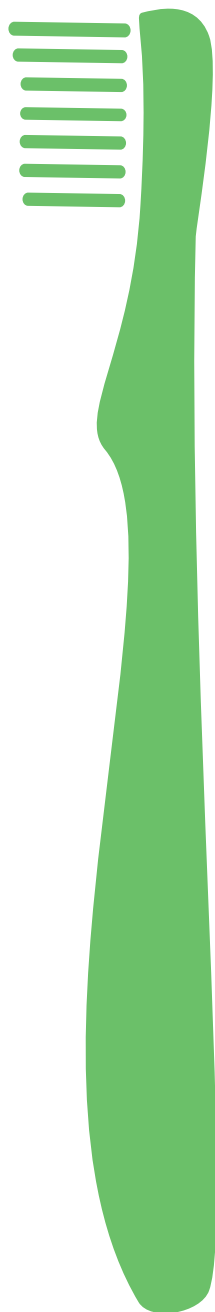
- **Brush the mouth guard** with a toothbrush and toothpaste after every use.
- **Soak the mouth guard** in denture cleaning solution for 20 to 30 minutes one time each month.
- **Freshen the mouth guard** by soaking it overnight in a cup of mouthwash.
- **Transport the mouth guard** in a sturdy container that has vents so air can circulate.
- **Replace the mouth guard** when it becomes worn down.





To stop the spread of germs:

- **Replace toothbrushes every four months.** Toothbrushes wear out and don't clean as well once the bristles get worn down. If a child gets sick, be sure to replace the toothbrush right away.
- **Sterilize toothbrushes once per week.** Microwaving a wet toothbrush for one minute or running it through the dishwasher will do the trick.
- **Store toothbrushes away from others.** Airborne bacteria can be shared between toothbrushes stored near each other in warm, moist environments like the bathroom.
- **Don't share toothpaste or bathroom drinking glasses.** All family members should have their own toothpaste and glass for rinsing after brushing.
- **Wash hands before and after brushing.** Make sure kids have clean hands before and after brushing to help lower the chance of germs entering the mouth.





A LITTLE WIGGLE ROOM

Baby teeth usually begin to loosen and fall out starting at around age 6. In general, girls start to lose teeth earlier than boys, though the timing can vary for everyone. The last baby teeth usually fall out by age 12 or 13.

It is safe to pull out a loose tooth

Hold the tooth firmly with a piece of gauze or tissue and give it a quick twist. If the tooth doesn't come out, wait a few days until it becomes looser on its own and try again. It's OK to have your child wiggle a loose tooth gently to help it loosen, but if there is pain or if the tooth hasn't fallen out after many days, you may want to contact your dentist.

A little bleeding is OK

Give your child a glass of water to swish around and then spit out. This will help remove the blood. His/her mouth may bleed for a few minutes after the tooth falls out, but just give the mouth a little time to heal on its own and stop bleeding. Applying a clean piece of gauze to the area for a few minutes can help, especially if your child is upset by seeing blood.

A little soreness is common after losing a tooth

Try applying a washcloth-wrapped bag of ice to your child's face where the soreness is located. This can also help reduce any minor swelling that may occur.



Learn more...

Check out the resources tab of this booklet for some great children's books about tooth loss and the Tooth Fairy that you and your child can read together.



For children, a visit from the Tooth Fairy may be the best part about losing a tooth!

Make the Tooth Fairy's visit extra special:

- **Have your child leave a note for the Tooth Fairy.**
- **Be sure your child is asleep** before the Tooth Fairy arrives!
- **Leave a handwritten note from the Tooth Fairy** complimenting the clean, healthy tooth or offering some tooth care tips along with a “treat” such as money or a small toy in exchange for the tooth.
- **Forget to grab the tooth?** Remind your child that the Tooth Fairy is very busy and may not have been able to get to every child's house in one night. Make sure to remember to grab it the next night!
- **What should the Tooth Fairy do with the tooth?** Some parents decide to throw out the tooth (don't let your child find it!), while some choose to save it. That's totally up to you, but make sure that the teeth remain hidden until your child no longer receives visits from the Tooth Fairy!



For more information on the Tooth Fairy, check out Delta Dental's “The Original Tooth Fairy Poll” at: www.theoriginaltoothfairypoll.com.



BRACE YOURSELF

As your child grows older, you may notice some large gaps between teeth that should be next to each other, crooked or overcrowded teeth, or chewing issues. If you have concerns, you should talk with your dentist, who may refer you to an orthodontist—a dentist who specializes in moving teeth and aligning jaws.

Orthodontic treatment could include:

- **Braces**—to straighten and realign teeth and fix over- or under-bites.
- **Spacers**—to make more room in between teeth that are overcrowded.
- **Retainers**—to prevent shifting of teeth or thumb sucking.



For additional information on orthodontics and to find an orthodontist, visit the website of the American Association of Orthodontists at: www.mylifemysmile.org.



RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES
For Parents and Kids

FINDING AND PAYING FOR DENTAL CARE



It's important to find a dentist that makes the entire family feel comfortable. To find a dentist in a certain community or area, use Delta Dental's online dentist search tool at any of the following websites:

Michigan

Delta Dental of Michigan
www.deltadentalmi.com

Ohio

Delta Dental of Ohio
www.deltadentaloh.com

Indiana

Delta Dental of Indiana
www.deltadentalin.com

North Carolina

Delta Dental of North Carolina
www.deltadentalnc.com

If a family does not have dental benefits, they may still be able to receive dental treatment at little to no cost. Below are some options for finding dental care:

Michigan*

State of Michigan's Oral Health Directory
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/oral_health_directory_302799_7.pdf

Ohio*

Ohio Low-cost Dental Care Listings
<http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/ohs/oral/oralhowdoi/finddental.aspx>

Indiana*

Indiana Low-cost Dental Care Listings
<http://www.indental.org/Low-Cost-Dental-Care>

North Carolina*

North Carolina Safety Net Dental Clinics' Listings
<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/oralhealth/services/safety-net.htm>

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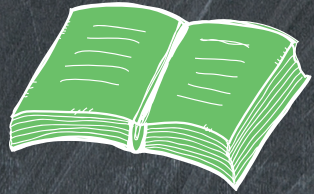


Brush

2 minutes, 2 times a day
(4 minutes total)

+

Read



20 minutes per day

24 minutes in 24 hours!

Easy math for a
healthy body and mind



Below is a list of great oral health books for kids:

- *ABC Dentist: Healthy Teeth from A–Z* by Harriet Ziefert and Liz Murphy
- *Andrew's Loose Tooth* by Robert Munsch
- *Behold, No Cavities!: A Visit to the Dentist (SpongeBob SquarePants)* by Sarah Willson
- *Melvin the Magnificent Molar!* by Julia Cook and Laura Jana, MD
- *Oh, the Things You Can Do That Are Good for You!* by Tish Rabe
- *Open Wide* by Laurie Keller
- *Show Me Your Smile!: A Visit to the Dentist (Dora the Explorer)* by Christine Ricci
- *Squeaky Clean: All About Hygiene (Sesame Street Happy Healthy Monsters Series)* by Kara McMahon
- *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions from Around the World* by Selby Beeler
- *The Tooth Book* by Dr. Seuss
- *The Tooth Book: A Guide to Healthy Teeth and Gums* by Edward Miller
- *Tooth Trouble* by Jane Clarke





FROM DROOL TO SCHOOL VIDEO

Sometimes we take our teeth for granted. Why? Maybe it's because we get a practice set when we're young. Or maybe it's because we figure 32 permanent teeth are more than enough when we're older. Whatever the reason, it's important to remember that as children grow, dental needs change. And whether it's the first set or the second set, we want healthy teeth—and healthy bodies too.

Visit Delta Dental's website and watch our cool "From Drool to School" video to learn more:

Michigan

www.deltadentalmi.com/drooltoschool

Ohio

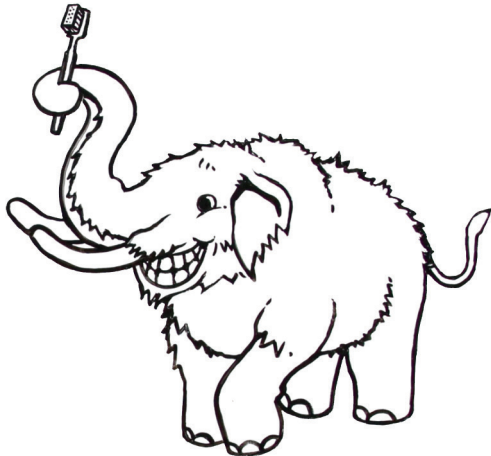
www.deltadentaloh.com/drooltoschool

Indiana

www.deltadentalin.com/drooltoschool

North Carolina

www.deltadentalnc.com/drooltoschool



HEALTHY TEETH CHART



It's important that you brush your teeth for two minutes, two times a day—once in the morning (☀) and once at night (☾). Use this chart to help you remember. Hang it where it is easy to see—when you finish brushing, make a ✓ for a job well done!

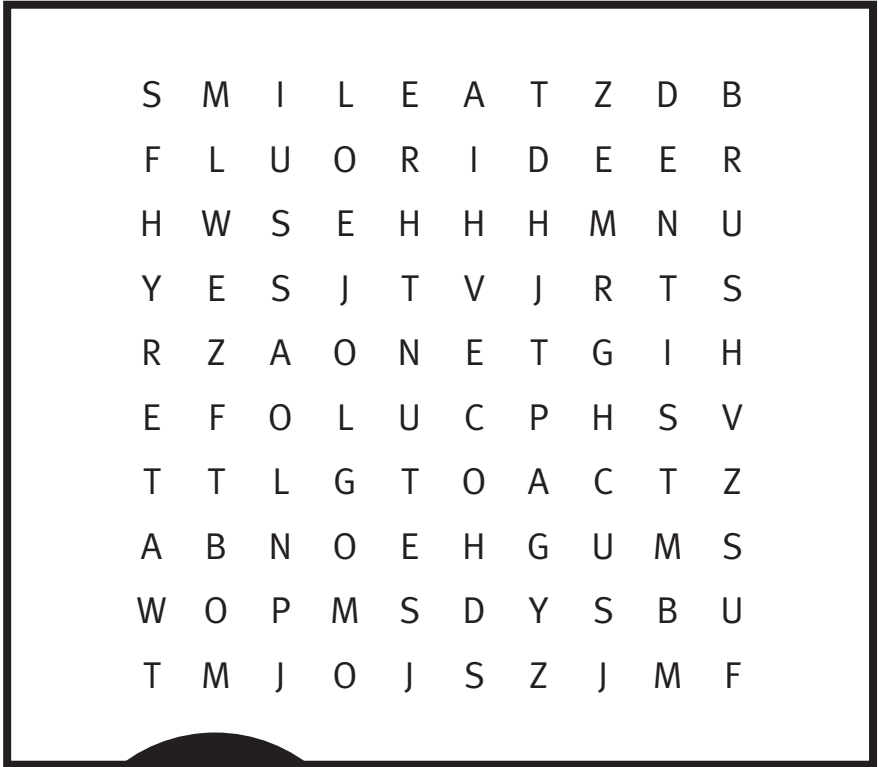
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
☀							
☾							
☀							
☾							
☀							
☾							
☀							
☾							

Keep those teeth healthy and strong!

CAN YOU FIND THESE WORDS?



Can you find the hidden words? They may be up, down or diagonal, and spelled out forward or backward.



BRUSH

DENTIST

FLOSS

FLUORIDE

GUMS

HEALTHY

SMILE

TONGUE

TOOTH

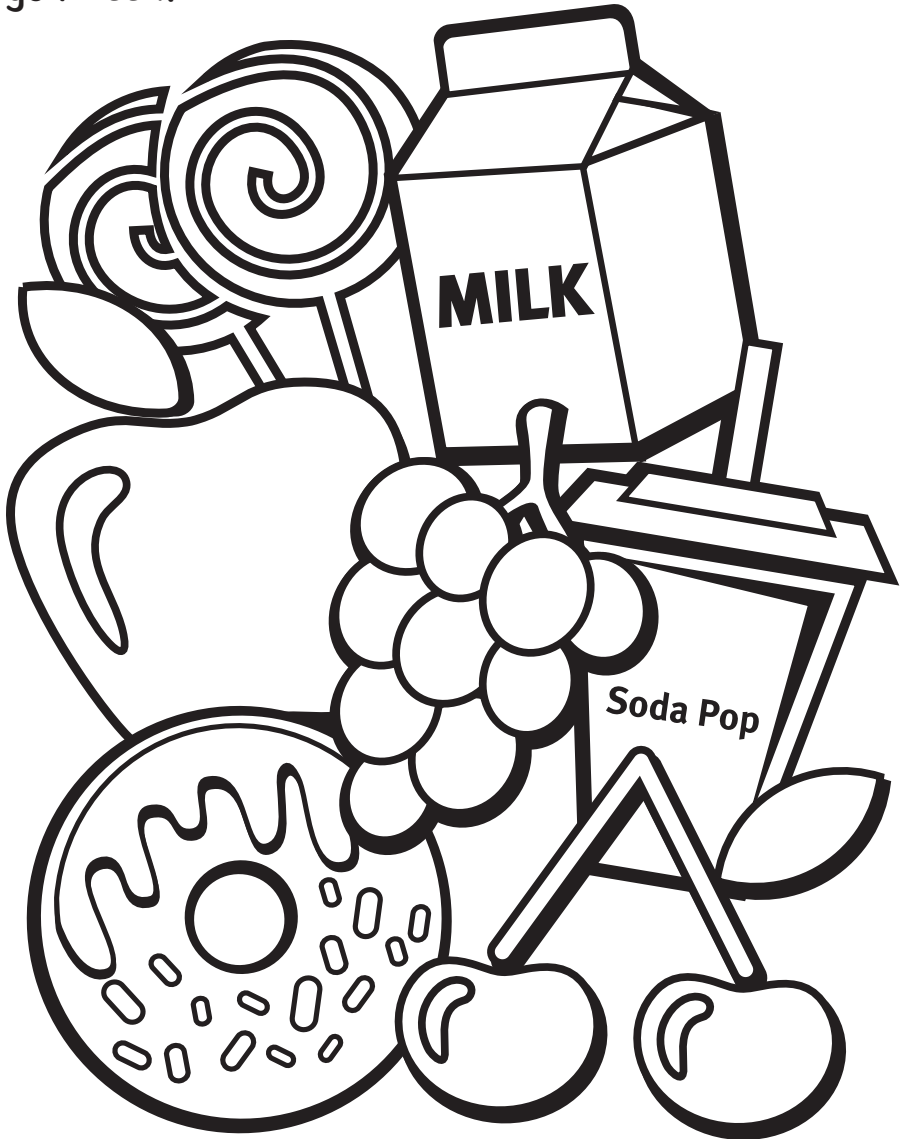
WATER



CHOOSE THE HEALTHY FOODS



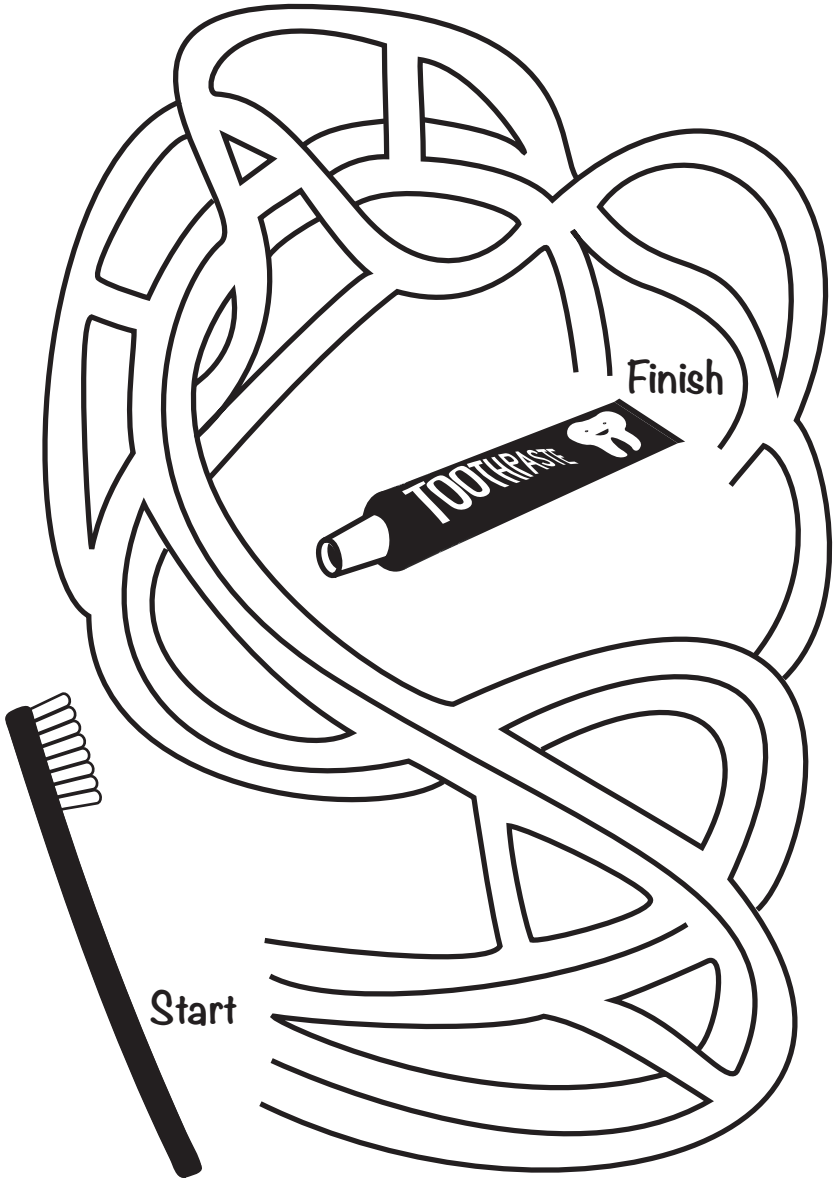
Fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods keep your teeth and body strong. Color the foods below. Then, can you circle the foods that are healthy for you and your teeth?



SOLVE THE MAZE



You can't brush your teeth properly without toothpaste. Work your way through the maze to find toothpaste for the toothbrush.



FILL IN THE BLANKS



Use the word bank on the left to fill in the blanks.

TEETH

B _ _ _ _

BRUSH

_ _ _ _ **I** _ _

FLOSS

G _ _ _

FRUIT

PLAY

_ _ _ _ **S** _

DENTIST

M _ _ _ _

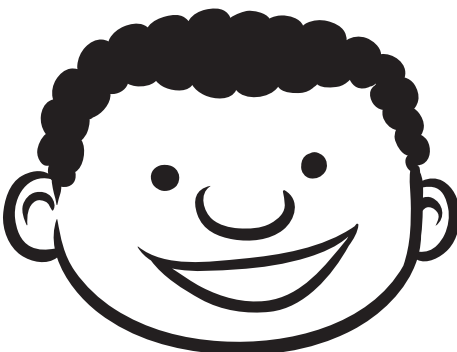
MOUTH

_ _ _ _ **I** _

GUMS

_ **L** _ _

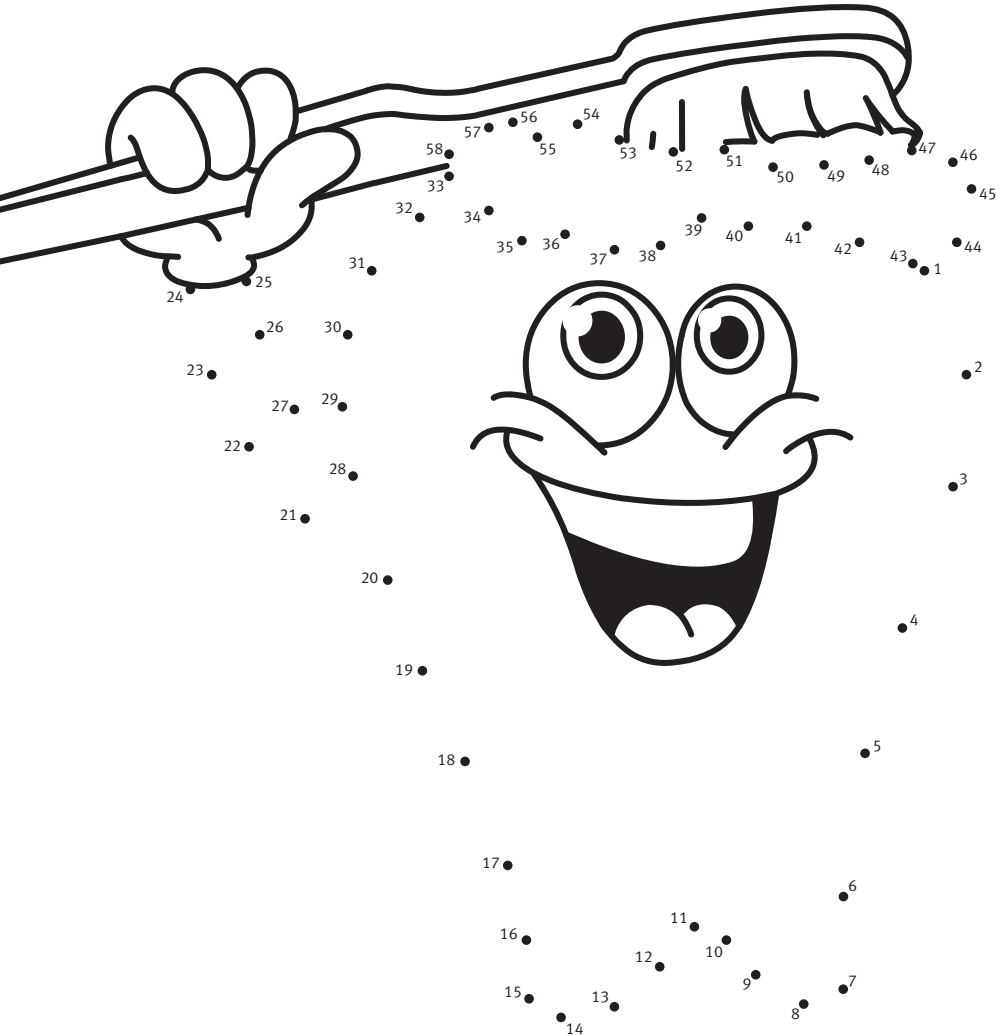
_ _ **E** _ _



CONNECT THE DOTS



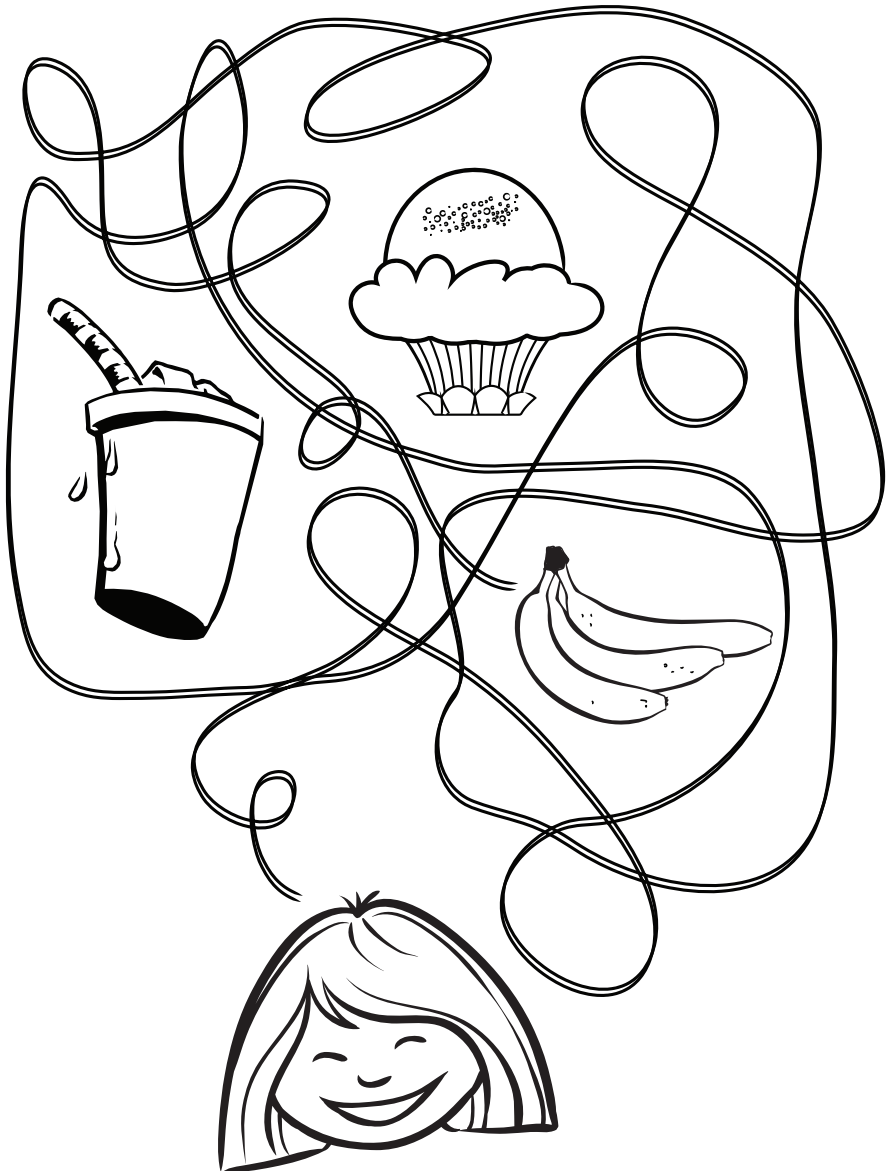
Draw the hidden picture by connecting the dots.
Then you can color the picture.



FOLLOW THE FLOSS



Help the girl follow the floss to find a healthy snack.





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