

healthy  
teeth,  
healthy  
me



**this kit includes:**

- ✦ A Sesame Street DVD
- ✦ Tips for parents/caregivers
- ✦ Children's activities





A creation of

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**The nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street and so much more**

**Sesame Workshop** is the nonprofit educational organization that revolutionized children's television programming with the landmark Sesame Street. The Workshop produces local Sesame Street programs, seen in over 140 countries, and other acclaimed shows to help bridge the literacy gap, including The Electric Company. Beyond television, the Workshop produces content for multiple media platforms on a wide range of issues including literacy, health, and military deployment. Initiatives meet specific needs to help young children and families develop critical skills, acquire healthy habits, and build emotional strength to prepare them for lifelong learning. Learn more at [sesameworkshop.org](http://sesameworkshop.org).

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**SESAME STREET**

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# teeth count!

Caring for your child's teeth early on is an important part of keeping her whole body healthy. Healthy baby teeth help your child talk, eat healthy foods, and develop strong permanent teeth. Children with healthy teeth are better able to learn in school, maintain strong bodies, feel good about themselves, and build lifelong healthy habits.



This family guide includes fun ideas and information to help you care for your child's teeth and to help her know—her teeth count!

- ♥ **Happy, Healthy Smiles:** tips on brushing and caring for teeth
- 🍏 **Strong Teeth, Strong Bodies:** foods that are good for your child's teeth and growing body
- 👤 **Team Teeth:** ways you and your child can connect with the people who care for his teeth
- 😊 **PLUS: Children's Section:** "Let's Pretend" story, "A-Maze-ing Apples" activity, and the "Super Teeth" chart

Together, you and your child can discover how fun and easy it can be to take care of his teeth.

# happy, healthy smiles

Healthy teeth start at home. There are lots of simple things you can do to help your young child learn to take good care of his mouth—especially his first (baby) teeth. Use these ideas to get started.

## Tooth Together Time!

Brushing at least twice a day—after breakfast and before bed—is one of the best ways to take care of teeth. Help your child become a Super Brusher with these tips:



### THAT'S THE TOOTH!

Children should grow a total of 20 baby teeth. These teeth usually start to come in when children are 6 to 10 months old, and finish coming in by age 3.

- 🦷 **My Turn, Your Turn:** Preschoolers are still developing the muscles and skills they need to brush on their own. Help your child brush his teeth, and then ask him to take the lead and imitate your actions. Have fun as you remind him to rinse and spit out the toothpaste.
- 🦷 **'Round and 'Round:** Show your child how to brush in gentle circles, remembering to include the front, back, inside, and outside of his teeth (even the ones that are hard to reach!), and how to open up to brush the tops of teeth.
- 🦷 **Brush and Groove:** Your child should brush for about two minutes. Play music or sing "The A-B-C Song" to your child to help him keep track of the time.



## AGES AND STAGES

Here's how to keep your child's smile healthy, age by age:

### Tools of the Trade

These two trusty tools help keep your child's teeth (and body!) healthy for a lifetime:

#### Toothbrush

- 🦷 Look for children's toothbrushes that have small heads and soft bristles. Add to your child's interest by letting her choose the color.
- 🦷 Keep germs away by rinsing your child's toothbrush after brushing. Stand it up to help it air dry.
- 🦷 Change your child's toothbrush about once every three months. If the bristles are no longer straight and firm, or if your child has been sick, change the toothbrush right away.

#### Toothpaste

- 🦷 Help your child learn to use the right amount by putting toothpaste on her brush (just a smear for children under age 2; a pea-size amount for children ages 2 to 5).



#### Infant and toddler:

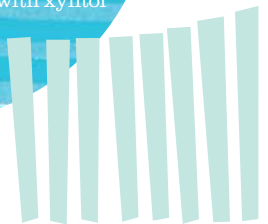
- Use a soft washcloth to clean your baby's gums and teeth every day, as soon as they come in.
- Schedule your child's first dental visit within six months after his first tooth, or by his first birthday.
- Soothe your teething child by gently rubbing her gums with a clean finger, cold washcloth, or chilled teething ring.

#### Preschooler:

- Remember to help your child brush his teeth.
- Set up regular dental visits. There you can also find out more about common concerns, such as thumb-sucking and mouth injuries.

#### School-age child:

- Keep track of your child's brushing and flossing routines. Help out when needed.
- During your child's regular dental visits, get advice about caring for baby teeth or new, permanent teeth. Feel free to ask for advice on issues from using mouth guards for sports to chewing gum with xylitol (a sugar substitute).





**SNACK  
TIPS**



**#1**

Be sure your child brushes, or at least rinses, his teeth after snacks and after drinks such as milk or juice.



**#2**

Space your child's meals and snacks to give his mouth time to wash away food.

# strong **teeth,** strong **bodies**

Foods that are good for teeth can also give your growing child the energy she needs to learn and play.

## Healthy Choices

Talk to your child about “anytime” and “sometime” foods.

- 🍏 **“Anytime”** foods have lots of nutrients and can be eaten any time. They include fresh fruit (apples, pears); fresh vegetables (carrots, celery); low-fat cheese; water. Encourage your child to “eat a rainbow” of colorful fruits and vegetables.
- 🍏 **“Sometime”** foods are usually sugary, salty, or fatty. They should be eaten only once in a while. “Sometime” foods include sticky sweets (caramels, chewy fruit “snacks”); sugary or acidic snacks and drinks (sour candy, sports drinks); starchy snacks (chips, cookies).



## team teeth

Help keep a strong team for your child's teeth in place: Visit your dental office twice a year and stay in touch with your child's primary-care physician and nurse.

### Meet the Team

- 🔑 Let your child know that the dentist and dental hygienist are her teeth's best friends. You might say, "The dentist or dental hygienist count and check teeth to make sure they're healthy."
- 🔑 Ask your child's primary-care physician or nurse to look at your child's teeth at his next visit. Each can help spot any problems early and make sure your child gets care if he needs it.

### Getting Ready

By talking to your child about visiting the dental office, you can help your child's visit go smoothly. Stay positive, and explain that a dental checkup is an important part of keeping healthy.

- 🔑 Describe to your child what will happen, including sitting in a big chair, having pictures taken of teeth, and having gooey fluoride (like vitamins for teeth) applied. Read with your child the photo story, "Let's Pretend" on pages 6–7, to help her learn more about the new experiences she will have and things she will see during the dental visit.
- 🔑 At the end of the visit, you will have an opportunity to ask your dentist or hygienist questions about how to keep your child's teeth healthy.



### MOBILE DENTISTRY

Mobile dental clinics serve many areas of the country. Their services are often low-cost or free. If cost or distance makes it hard to visit a dental office, check online or ask your local health department about mobile clinics or other low-cost dental services near you.

## let's pretend

Use the words in **blue** and pictures to act out a visit to the dental office. The next time your child has a dental visit, encourage him to look for some of the dental tools that Abby mentions.



Brushy brush! Pretend to **brush** your teeth. My mommy always helps me brush mine. All done? Let's pretend to **walk** to the dental office.



Here we are! Look, there's the dental hygienist! Let's **wave** hello. Check out that cool chair.



The dental hygienist is putting on a mask and some gloves. She's ready to count your teeth now. **Open wide!** Wow, she's using a light and a cute, little mirror to look inside your mouth. She's touching every tooth with a silver tool. Can you feel that?





Hi! It's me, Abby.

Have you ever visited the dental office? Let's pretend we're going there together!



Cleaning time! The dental hygienist has neat silver tools to clean your teeth. She rests a curved straw in your mouth that helps get the water out. **Gulp, gulp, gulp.** Oh, she's done! Now she'll brush your teeth with a buzzy toothbrush and a little bit of toothpaste. Let's make a **buzz** sound, like the toothbrush!



Pretend to **rinse** your mouth one more time. Here comes the dentist, ready to look inside your mouth. **Open** again! She says your teeth look healthy. Must be all that brushing.

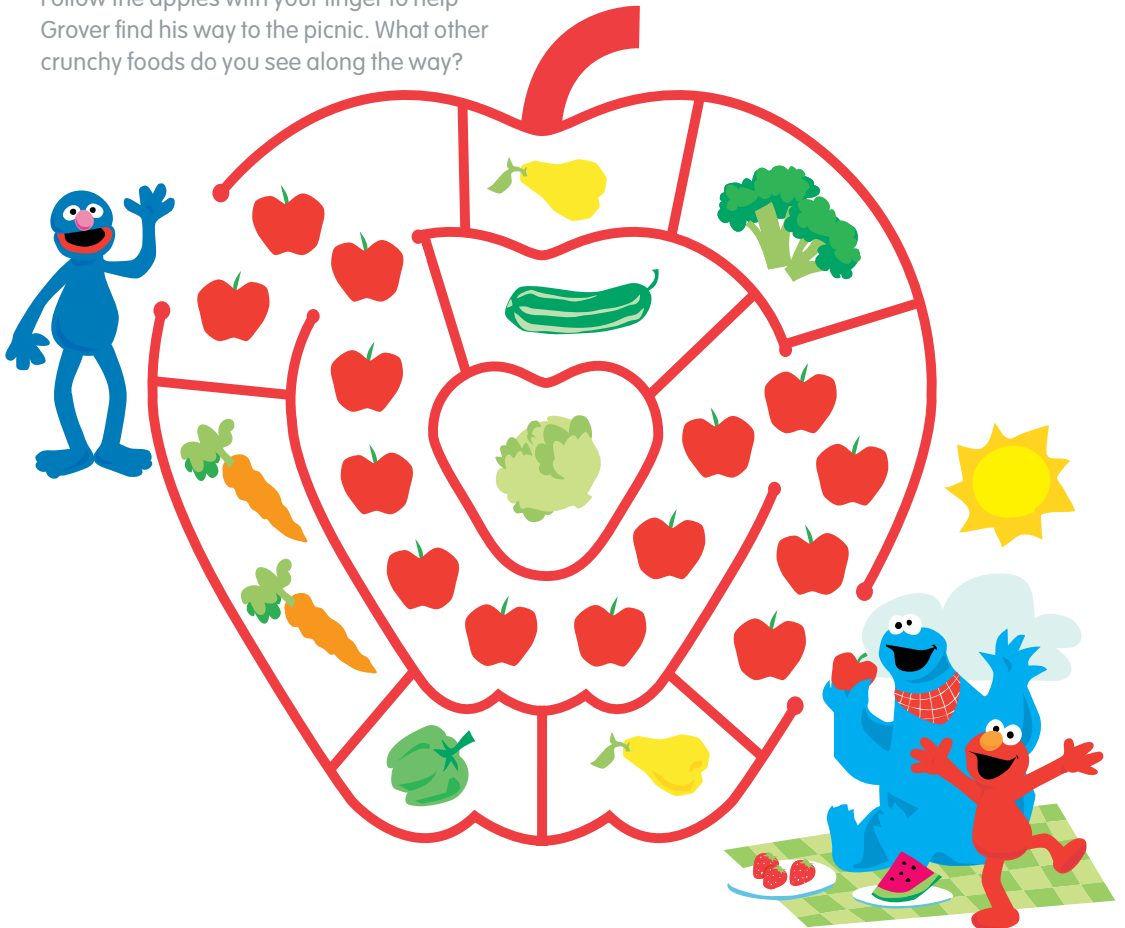


You're all done! Let's **skip** home. You know, that imaginary visit really made me want to show off my **smile**. Thanks for pretending with me!

# a-maze-ing apples

Grover loves crunchy fruits and vegetables!  
They are good for your teeth and body.

Follow the apples with your finger to help  
Grover find his way to the picnic. What other  
crunchy foods do you see along the way?



# Super teeth chart

Use this chart to encourage good habits that can make teeth healthy and strong. Hang it somewhere that is easy for your child to see. When your child finishes brushing, make a ✓ together for a job well done. When she sees the filled-in chart, your Super Brusher will have something to smile about!



sunday	monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday	
							morning
							night
							morning
							night
							morning
							night
							morning
							night

What other things have you done to keep your teeth healthy?

