

## Basics of Oral Health 2

# Acid Attack!

**Instructions:** *This small group demonstration shows children and parents how the combination of germs and food causes cavities. In the demonstration, baking soda represents food, black pepper represents germs and vinegar is used to create the acid.*

### Demonstration

Imagine that this bowl is your child’s mouth. We know that germs already live in this mouth. *Sprinkle in pepper.*

Let’s say this is a baby who is in the habit of going to sleep with a bottle of formula/milk. *(The baking soda represents food, pour in some baking soda)* Germs plus food make acid. *(Pour small amount of vinegar in until it begins to bubble up)*

We call that the “acid attack” and it lasts for 20 minutes each time we eat or drink.

The bottle falls out of baby’s mouth so the mother wakes up again. Mom pops the bottle back in. Baby drinks more milk *(add more baking soda)* and what happens? *(pour in more vinegar)* Twenty more minutes of acid attack.

Later in the night, baby cries again. Mom stumbles in and props the bottle. What happens? *(repeat baking soda and vinegar—by now the container is pretty full of bubbles and looks dirty)*

By now, Baby’s teeth have been sitting in acid all night long, getting weak and soft.

This is how children get Baby Bottle Tooth decay. You have probably seen it—you might have other names for it (bottle rot, etc.) The official name is Early Childhood Caries. But it isn’t just milk in baby bottles that leads to decay. Think about the soda pop you sip on all afternoon. Or crackers your preschooler snacks on all morning. Each time we eat or drink—anything but water—our teeth get twenty minutes of acid attacks. If we eat too often we get acid attacks again and again. Eventually, our teeth get weak and can easily decay or get cavities.

### Supplies

- Small bowl or vase.
- Baking soda.
- Black ground pepper.
- White vinegar.
- Spoon.
- “Germs and My Teeth” handout.

## Discussion and Parent Practice Handout

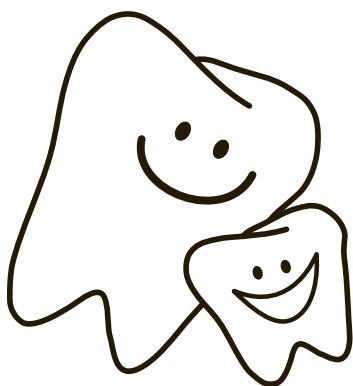
- What can we do?
- Limit acid attacks. Clean teeth after eating.
- Serve food or drink at meal and snack time instead of all day or all night long—3 meals and 2 snacks (depending on the child’s age).
- Avoid filling sippy cups with juice or sugary beverages—if children are thirsty, fill it with water.
- Avoid putting children to bed with a bottle unless it has water in it.
- During this discussion time, we’ve talked about some important things you can do to take care of your family’s teeth. The handout provides reminders of things you can do to keep your family’s teeth healthy.

# Germs and My Teeth

## Did You Know?

- Germs cause cavities. We have germs in our mouths that use the food we eat to make acid. This acid weakens teeth and causes cavities.
- To prevent cavities, clean away food and germs. Brush every day—after breakfast and before bed.

Hi! I'm a cavity germ.



## Do Together

Make toothbrushing a regular and fun part of your child's bedtime routine. When you brush your child's teeth tonight, tell him/her you're going to get all of the "cavity germs".

Say fun things like, "Oh, I got one!" or "Oh, there's another one, I'm going to get it!"

## Take the Healthy Mouth Challenge!

I will:

- Brush my child's teeth every morning and night with a soft bristle toothbrush and fluoridated toothpaste—a smear from the first tooth up to age 3, the pea-sized amount after that.
- Make toothbrushing fun by telling my child "I'm going to get all of the cavity germs! Oh, I got one!"

