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Terrific Teeth



Not only do your teeth give you a beautiful smile, they also help you break down the food you eat. The different teeth in your mouth all have very special jobs when it comes to certain types of food. Some teeth are meant for **biting**, others are used for **ripping** and **tearing** food apart, and still other teeth are used for **grinding** food into small bits you can swallow.

It is very important that you take care of your teeth properly so they can continue to do their job. That means brushing your teeth, tongue, and gums at least twice a day everyday to get rid of the food that is left behind in your mouth after you've swallowed it. If you don't take good care of your teeth, bacteria will grow on the food left behind in your mouth, and your teeth will develop tiny holes, called **cavities**, which weaken your teeth.

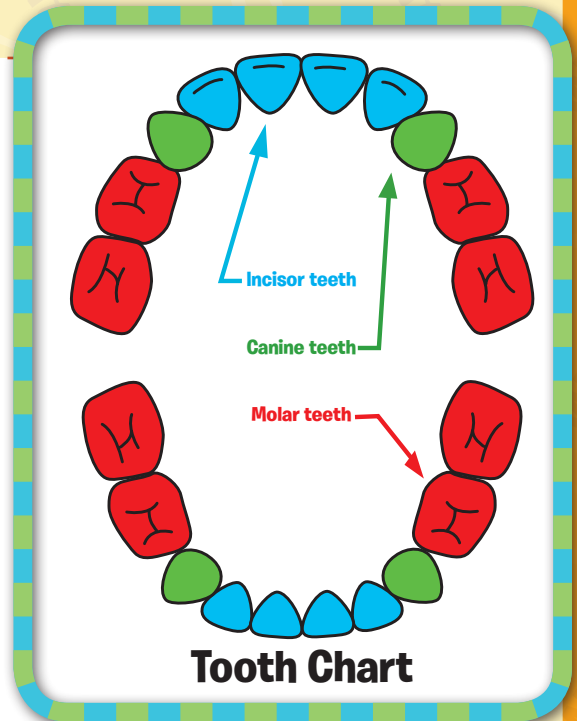
In the experiment below, try eating foods with different textures with the different types of teeth in your mouth. Keep track of how certain teeth help you eat some food better than others and fill your stomach.

You will need:

- Soap and water
- A mirror
- Nuts
- A banana
- An apple

Instructions:

1. Make sure to wash your hands since you will be putting your hands in your mouth.
2. Inspect your teeth in a mirror and notice that they are different shapes. Each type of tooth has a special way of breaking down the food that you eat.
3. Feel the teeth in the front. These flat front teeth are called **incisors** and they are good for biting soft foods.
4. Feel your pointy teeth on the side of your mouth. These teeth are called **canines** and they are best for ripping and tearing food apart.
5. Feel the big, grooved teeth in the back of your mouth. These are called **molars** and they're used for grinding up your food into small pieces so they are safe for you to swallow.
6. Start by biting into a soft banana. Next try a crunchy apple. Now try some nuts. Which teeth did you use to eat each piece of food? Try using the different teeth in your mouth to eat these foods. Which teeth worked best on the banana, apple, and nuts? Which teeth made it difficult to chew the food?



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