Dental Professional Classroom Visit Script

Hi! My name is Ms./Mr. [Last Name] and I'm here to talk to you about keeping your teeth healthy and clean. We're going to start with a pop quiz! Don't worry, it's not a real quiz, but just a fun way for me to see how much you know about taking care of your teeth! After I ask a question, I want you to hold up your left hand if the answer is "yes" and your right hand if the answer is "no." Let's see how many of you know the facts about oral health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should I brush my teeth both in the morning and before bed? Y</th>
<th>Do I need to brush my teeth two times a day, when I wake up and when I go to bed? Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is pop/soda healthy for my teeth? N</td>
<td>Is juice healthy for my teeth? N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a cavity caused by germs and sugar? Y</td>
<td>Do cavities form when germs eat the sugar in my mouth and produce an acid? Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If my adult teeth fall out, will they grow back? N</td>
<td>Are my adult teeth permanent, meaning they are supposed to last my whole life? Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I use my teeth when I talk? Y</td>
<td>Do I need my teeth to speak, eat, and smile? Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Great job! I can see that you guys really know your stuff when it comes to oral health. But all of us can use a refresher course from time to time to make sure we don't get cavities, that we don't get a toothache and that we have a nice smile.

So I've put together five fun "Total Tooth Truth" facts that will help you keep your mouth as healthy as it can be. Are you ready?

**Total Tooth Truth Fact #1: Most kids in this class are taking care of the teeth they will use for the rest of their lives.**

How many of you have lost a tooth and had a grown-up tooth grow in? [Allow time for kids to raise their hands]

Most [or all] of you have! We want to keep those grown-up teeth healthy. When our grown-up teeth stay strong and healthy, they will last us for the rest of our lives! But when we don't take care of them, they start to fall out. Does anyone in here think it would be fun to wear false teeth when they are thirty? [Allow time for them to laugh, raise their hands.]

Because the teeth you have now will have to last for the rest of your life, it's really important that you are taking care of them right now.

**Total Tooth Truth Fact #2: Our mouths are germ factories**

Does anyone in here like the idea of having germs in their mouth?

I didn't think so! But, the truth is that our mouths are full of germs. If you looked at your teeth under a microscope, you would probably see:

- Plaque, a sticky substance that coats your teeth. Think of plaque as a gooey pond where germs love to hide.
- Sugar. Germs love sugar as much as you do, which means the more sugar that's in your mouth, the more germs will be there.
- Acid. When germs eat sugar, they produce acid. Acid eats away at your teeth causing cavities.

Because our mouths are naturally full of germs, it is really important that we do our best to take care of them so our teeth and bodies can stay healthy.
Total Tooth Truth Fact #3: If you don't take care of your teeth, you could get a cavity.

Does anyone know what a cavity is? [allow time for them to raise their hand and answer]

It's a hole in a tooth! A cavity is often so tiny that only a dentist can see it, but you can definitely feel it! It may not hurt at first, but after awhile, a cavity can cause all sorts of pain and damage.

Here are some fast facts about cavities:

- They cause our teeth and mouths to hurt.
- If your mouth or teeth are hurting and you think you might have a cavity, you need to go to the dentist as quickly as possible. The dentist will fix the cavity and fill it so it doesn’t get worse.
- If you don’t go to the dentist when you have a cavity, the tooth may become infected and it may have to be pulled out.
- The best way to prevent a cavity is to brush and floss every day and visit the dentist twice a year.

Total Tooth Truth Fact #4: It's actually pretty easy to keep your teeth healthy if you know your facts about oral health.

Does anyone know what causes cavities? [allow time for them to raise their hand and answer]

Cavities are actually caused by germs or bacteria inside your mouth. The bacteria eat the sugar in your mouth, which makes acid that attacks your teeth. Ouch!

But there are simple tools that can help you to prevent cavities.

The first I’ll talk about is the dentist. One of the best ways to keep your mouth and teeth healthy is to visit your dentist twice a year.

There are also tools you can use at home. They are:

- A toothbrush [hold up toothbrush in kit] If you are brushing your teeth at least twice a day—one when you get up and once before bed—you are getting a lot of that sugar and plaque out of your mouth and making sure that acid doesn't attack your teeth.
- Toothpaste [hold up toothpaste in kit] A good tube of toothpaste can help scrub away that sugar and plaque, but can also give you fluoride, a mineral that helps keep your teeth strong. [point to the word fluoride on the toothpaste tube]
- Dental floss. Flossing is just as important as brushing as it gets the sugar out from those cracks between your teeth. Plus, it can help prevent gum disease. You should do it at least once a day.
- Sugar-free gum [hold up gum in kit] Of course, it is almost impossible to brush and floss every time you get sugar on your teeth so another good tool to use is sugar-free gum. It helps your mouth to create more saliva that washes that sugar—and the germs—away to keep your teeth healthy.

I'd like to show you how to best brush to make sure you are doing it right at home. [show class best methods]

Can you tell me some good times to chew sugar-free gum? [Allow students to answer, some possible answers may be after lunch, at school if it's allowed, after sports practice, in the car, after snack.] That is right, when you can’t brush, chew a piece of sugar free gum.

Total Tooth Truth Fact #5: Going to the dentist can actually be fun.

Who here has been to the dentist? [Allow them to raise their hands]

It's so great that you have been! I actually work with the dentist at a dentist's office, so I know what goes on behind the doors. And let me reassure you: There is nothing scary or dangerous going on back there. At the dentist's office, our whole goal is to help you keep your teeth healthy. When you visit the dentist, you may:

- Get x-rays to look for cavities or trouble spots on your teeth. We can also see how your permanent teeth are developing through x-rays.
- Put special sealants—a plastic coating—on your back molars to keep them extra protected.
- Get a new toothbrush, toothpaste or dental floss to use at home.

It actually can be really fun. And it feels great to know that you’re taking good care of your health.
Now that I've shared my five Total Tooth Truth Facts, I'm wondering if you have any questions for me about oral health.

[Allow students to answer and respond as long as necessary.]

It was very nice to meet you all. Thank you for your time today!

Chicago Community
Oral Health Forum
C.C.O.H.F