



# Brush Two Minutes, Twice a Day



## Fun Family Activities to Teach Your Child About Oral Health

We use our teeth to chew, speak, and smile every day. Young children may not understand why oral health is so important. These hands-on science and math experiments will help your child discover why brushing his or her teeth for two minutes, twice a day is an important thing to do.

### What Are Healthy Toothbrushing Habits?

#### Hands-on Experiment 1: Measuring a Minute

Ask your child to find the number two somewhere in your house. Ask a variety of questions such as: *How many people can be buckled up in the front seat of a car? How many feet do you use when you jump? If you make pretend glasses with your hands, how many hands are you using?* Challenge your child to find a new number “2” for each answer. Ask your child what the number two has to do with brushing his or her teeth? Show your child the Oral Health Poster and discuss why brushing his or her teeth for more time twice a day is important.

Now, ask your child: *What can you do in a minute?* Write down your child’s answers. To help get the ideas flowing, ask your child how many times he or she can hop in one minute, recite the alphabet, or clap. Tell your child he or she will be the tester in a time-measurement experiment. Use a clock or digital timer to measure a minute and count the number of times your child completes the actions he or she named. Record how much time it took to complete the tasks and how many actions were completed. Once the data is collected and recorded,

ask your child what he or she learned about the length of a minute. Was a minute longer or shorter than he or she thought it would be?

#### What Can Harm My Teeth?

#### Hands-on Experiment 2: Tracking Tooth Decay

**Prepare for the experiment:** Gather the following items: hard-boiled white eggs (at least six); dark-colored soda; water; vinegar (for first-grade children); clear plastic cups; slips of paper or cup labels with “water,” “soda,” and “vinegar” written on them; tape; pencils; paper; crayons. Note: If the eggs are cracked, even slightly, they could change the outcome of the experiment.

**Notes About the Experiment:** The dark soda will stain the egg. These stains can be removed by brushing with toothpaste. The vinegar will create pits on the egg’s surface and eventually make the eggshell rubbery rather than rigid. Make sure to reassure your child that if he or she skips toothbrushing once or twice, his or her teeth will not deteriorate. For more background, view Education Robot’s “Use Eggs As a Dental Hygiene Experiment” YouTube video at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivv4I9PJmXM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivv4I9PJmXM).

#### Set up the experiment with your child:

Explain to your child that you will do a fun experiment that shows how food and drink can change his or her teeth. Help your child attach the “water” and “soda” labels to two cups. Give your first grader a third cup and have him or her attach the “vinegar” label. Pour water into one cup, soda into the second cup, and vinegar into the third. Allow your child to submerge one egg in each cup and place them where they can remain undisturbed.

Explain: *We are going to leave these eggs soaking for two days to see what will happen to them.* Discuss your child’s predictions of what they think will happen to the eggs. Ask: *What would happen to your teeth if they were covered in soda?* Ask: *How do you keep food and drink off your teeth after you’re done eating?* Show your child the Oral Health Poster to show that your child should brush for two minutes, twice a day.

#### Day 1

Ask your child: *What do you think happened to the eggs since yesterday?* Go over to the eggs to see what happened after one

For educational videos and oral health tips, visit [2min2x.org](http://2min2x.org).



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day of soaking in the liquids. After discussing what your child sees, give him or her the grade-appropriate Experiment Sheet. Have PreK and Kindergarten students circle “Day 1” on the Experiment Sheet to make sure they mark their observations in the right place. Have first graders check “Day 1” at the top of each response box and check the “Prediction” box in the final square. Guide your child to draw what they notice about each egg. Have your first grader add written descriptions to their illustrations. First graders should also record their predictions of what they think will happen to an egg after brushing.

After your child has finished recording his or her observations, ask: *Why did we leave these eggs soaking in different liquids?* Explain: *When we don't brush our teeth, the foods and drinks that we put into our mouths can stay on and change our teeth just like the liquids did to the eggs.* Explain that when the enamel, or hard outside of our teeth, changes, we can get cavities. Explain to first graders that the natural bacteria in their mouths will use acid to dissolve food and sugars left behind on their teeth. This acid can eat at the tooth's enamel the same way the vinegar wore away the egg's surface. Ask: *How do we clean food and liquid off our teeth?*

• Ask your child if he or she remembers how long and how many times a day each person should brush his or her teeth. Prompt your child by showing him or her to the Oral Health Poster as needed.

### Day 2

• Give your PreK or Kindergarten child the same Experiment Sheet she or he used on “Day 1.” Give your first grader a blank Experiment Sheet and have him or her circle “Day 2” at the top of each response box and check the “Result” box in the final square. Tell your child this will be the final egg observation. As your child records the changes he or she sees, tell him or her to be careful to show differences between “Day 1” and “Day 2.” Discuss the relationship between what happened to the eggs and what can happen to teeth if they are not brushed.

• Remove one of the soda-stained eggs from the soda. Ask: *Do we have anything in our house that can help remove these stains?* Guide your child to the bathroom if he or she doesn't immediately think of toothpaste. If you have toothpaste with fluoride, point to the word *fluoride* on the toothpaste tube. Explain that all toothpaste can help keep your teeth clean, but only fluoride toothpaste can make your tooth's enamel stronger.

• Apply a little bit of toothpaste to a toothbrush. Time your child brushing the soda stains on the egg for 30 seconds. After 30 seconds, ask: *Did we remove all of the stains? Why or why not? How long should we brush?* Repeat the brushing activity for longer intervals, finishing up by brushing for two minutes.

### How Do I Take Care of My Teeth?

### Hands-on Experiment 3: Family Conversations About Oral Health

• Ask your child to tell family members about the egg experiment and explain why it is so important to remember to take care of your teeth. Make sure your child explains that we must brush our teeth for two minutes, twice a day. For more hands-on experimenting, ask your child to practice timing him or herself and/or family members brushing for two minutes. Go to the “Watch and Brush” page at [2min2x.org/watch-brush](http://2min2x.org/watch-brush) and play a two-minute video that your child can watch while he or she brushes for two minutes. You can also use the song timer from a favorite song to make timing two minutes easy and fun.

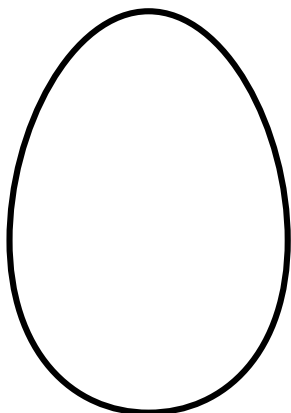


Name: \_\_\_\_\_ PreK-K Experiment Sheet

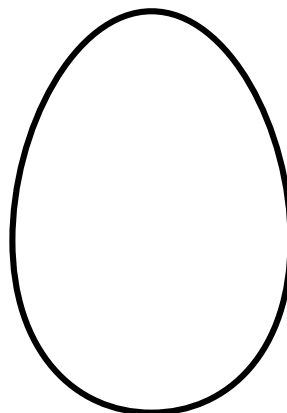
# Egg Experiment

**Directions:** Color in each egg to show how it looked on Day 1 and Day 2 of the egg experiment.

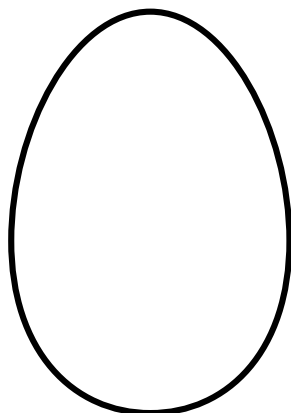
**Day 1:** Egg in water



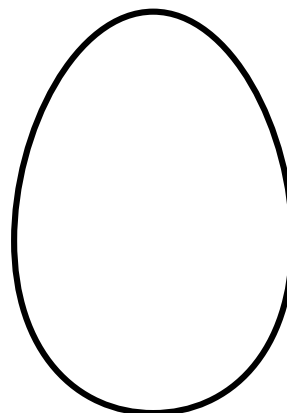
**Day 2:** Egg in water



**Day 1:** Egg in soda



**Day 2:** Egg in soda



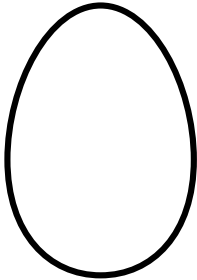
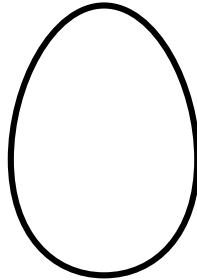
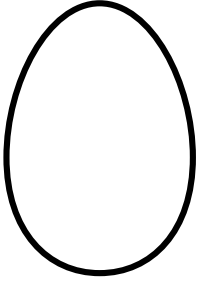
Brush your teeth  
for two minutes,  
twice a day.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ **First-Grade Experiment Sheet**

# Egg Experiment

**Directions:** Color in each egg to show how it looked during the experiment. Then record what you observed.

<p>Egg in water</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DAY 1                      <input type="checkbox"/> DAY 2</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> 	<p>Egg in soda</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DAY 1                      <input type="checkbox"/> DAY 2</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> 
<p>Egg in vinegar</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> DAY 1                      <input type="checkbox"/> DAY 2</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> 	<p>Egg after brushing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prediction                      <input type="checkbox"/> Result</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Did it make a difference to brush the eggs for a longer amount of time? If so, how?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

