

Dental Cavities for Kids!

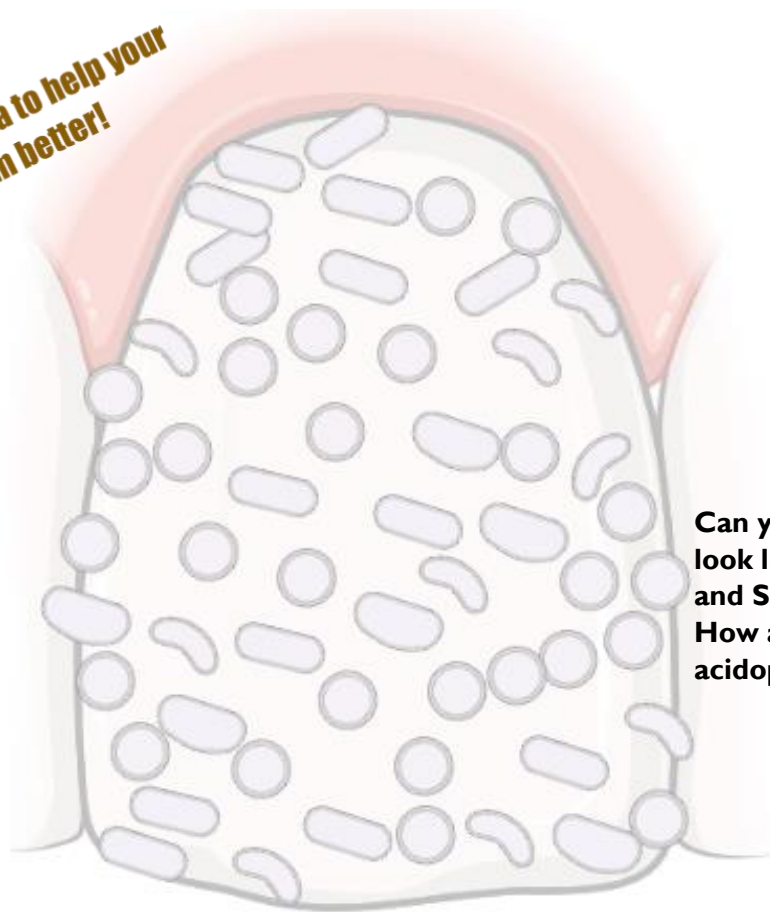
When our teeth decay, we get cavities. These cavities are caused by bacteria which destroy parts of our teeth. When our teeth decay, we all get bad breath and gross, bad tastes in our mouths. To prevent this dental decay dentists recommend brushing and flossing daily to get rid of decay promoting bacteria.

Some of the bacteria which cause cavities are:

- Streptococcus mutans
- Streptococcus sobrinus
- Lactobacillus acidophilus

These bacteria can live off the carbohydrates (sugars) in our bread, candy, and other food that we eat. **Streptococcus mutans** and **Streptococcus sobrinus** are both streptococci (circular, chain-forming bacteria) which are facultative aerobes (can live both with oxygen and in environments with low oxygen concentrations). These both live on the smooth sides of your teeth, causing cavities that may be difficult to detect by eye. **Lactobacillus acidophilus**, a rod-shaped bacterium, causes cavities in the pits and cracks of the surfaces of teeth. These bacteria can cause some of the most decay in kids between the ages of 3 and 12 years old! When bacteria break down sugars, the sugars are converted to acid plaque which can result in **gum disease**. Leaving gum disease to grow can result in infections and tooth death and decay. Make sure to brush and floss those teeth!

Color the bacteria to help your dentist see them better!



Can you find the bacteria which look like Streptococcus mutans and Streptococcus sobrinus? How about lactobacillus acidophilus?