



Toothpaste - What is toothpaste?

Fact

- Toothpaste is an abrasive paste (an abrasive is something that will scratch or grind something)
- In the case of toothpaste, it grinds away the leftover food and plaque on your teeth, with the help of your toothbrush.
- The abrasive in toothpaste is called Dicalcium phosphate dihydrate and it makes up about a 5th of a tube of toothpaste
- The other main part of toothpaste is the paste which is made up of water and things to help it spread through your mouth easily like a type of detergent which makes it foam and something to make your teeth shiny.

Do you know

- The flavours of toothpaste are usually from plants like Spearmint and Peppermint most toothpastes are sweetened with artificial sweetener.
- Before toothpaste was invented people used all kinds of dry, rough things as an abrasive to clean their teeth – things like crushed eggshell, pumice the burnt hooves of animals!!!
- Before toothbrushes were invented people used twigs or their fingers to brush their teeth.
- A couple of hundred years ago when people didn't know about brushing their teeth most people had black rotten teeth especially if they ate lots of sugar like Queen Elizabeth the first.

Experiments you can do

Have a look at the back of your toothpaste tube for the ingredients.

Can you find Dicalcium phosphate dihydrate which is the abrasive most toothpaste companies use? How about Sodium Monofluorophosphate? It's the most common type of Fluoride used in toothpaste and scientist believe it helps to keep your teeth strong.

Other Investigations

Next time a baby tooth falls out have a good look at it. Can you see where the nerves and roots run up into the tooth? If all yours have fallen out already and been replaced by your adult teeth you might have to have a look at a younger friends tooth :o) Inside the hard enamel your tooth is soft and pulpy and if the bacteria acid in the plaque on your teeth eats into your tooth and exposes the soft pulpy stuff that's when you get toothache and boy does it ache.

By brushing with a good toothbrush and toothpaste with abrasive in it you help to get rid of the plaque and the bacteria acid

Jokes

Why did the old man go to the dentist?

He thought he was getting a bit "long in the tooth".