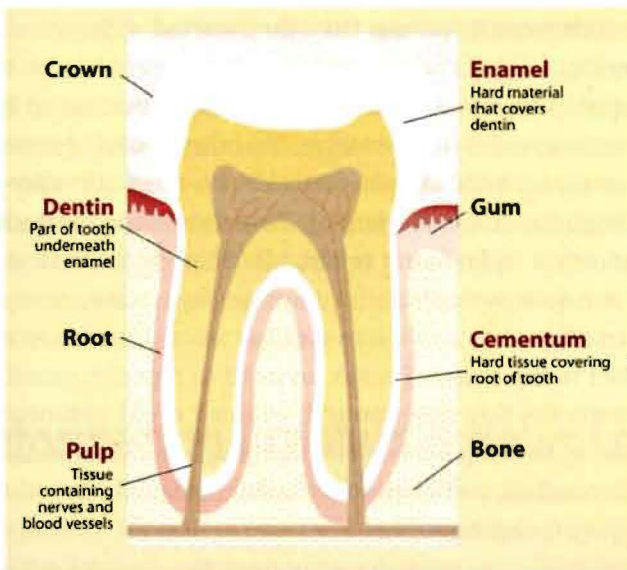


Anatomy of an information graphic

HEADLINE: Most information graphics should include some sort of headline. Graphics headlines could be written as a label or title like the one below. They can also be written more like a news headline, with a subject and verb, such as "Halloween candy threatens dental health." Regardless, always remember that a headline is meant to capsize the main focus of the graphic in a few concise, descriptive words.

INSIDE THE TOOTH: Cavity prevention guidelines

With Halloween just around the corner, children might be thinking of candy but parents should keep an eye on dental health. The sugary content of Halloween sweets can cause cavities. Below is a diagram showing the parts of the tooth along with more information about cavities.



How can cavities be prevented?
For starters, brush twice a day and floss once a day. See your dentist every six months. Brush your teeth immediately after eating chewy, sticky foods like candy.

What happens if you don't treat a cavity?
Cavities can grow large enough to destroy the nerves and blood vessels inside the tooth, create a tooth abscess, and destroy the pulp of the tooth.

How do cavities form?
Bacteria in the mouth converts food into acids. The combination of bacteria, acid, food particles and saliva forms plaque, which attaches itself to the enamel of the tooth. The acids in plaque dissolve the enamel, creating holes in the tooth known as cavities.

How do you know if you have a cavity?
If your tooth hurts, especially after you consume sweet, hot or cold food and drinks, you may have a cavity. You might also have visible pits or holes in your tooth. Your best bet is to visit a dentist. You may not know you have a cavity until your dentist takes x-rays of your teeth.

CHATTER: A good rule of thumb for writing introductory chatter is to first summarize or evaluate the information by providing context for the graphic. Then, provide a transition to the main body of the graphic. This can usually be done effectively in two to four sentences.

CALLOUTS: When labels need additional explanation or definition, beyond the one-word description, they can be accompanied by a callout. A callout is generally an additional sentence or two that provides more specific information about the visual portion of the graphic it accompanies.

Source: National Institutes of Health, American Dental Association, Loyola University Health System, Whyfiles.org, BBC, Kidshealth.org, University of Manitoba

by Katie Smith

SOURCE LINE: A source line should accompany all credible graphics packages. Let the reader know where your information comes from. After all, it's not likely that you, the graphics reporter, are an expert in everything!

EXPLAINER: Supplemental chunks of text are often useful in graphics packages that require additional context.

BYLINE: A byline lets the reader know who is responsible for compiling the information at hand, adding to the credibility of the graphic.