

## **ENQUIRING MINDS**

### **EQM EP 7 SEG 2**

LOCKIE: Let's join Holly and Lucinda as they visit the dentist and see if Holly has been taking care of her teeth.

HOLLY: Everyone likes to smile and show their teeth and by eating the right foods and brushing twice a day you can help keep your pearly whites in good shape. I'm going to meet a second grader who's keen to sink her teeth into a career as a dentist. Hi, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Hello.

HOLLY: So why is it you want to be a dentist?

LUCINDA: Because it's really interesting helping people with their teeth and using a lot of equipment.

HOLLY: And why do you think it's important to brush your teeth regularly and eat the right foods?

LUCINDA: Because then you won't have sore gums and when you eat your gums won't hurt.

HOLLY: Have you got any teeth that you've kept?

LUCINDA: No, they're all with the tooth fairy.

HOLLY: Do you want to come and meet a real dentist and go to a surgery and see heaps of cool stuff?

LUCINDA: Yes, please.

HOLLY: Alright.

JAMES: Teeth are important for a number of reasons. We use them daily, we probably don't realise it, but things such as simple as eating and they're involved with speech and of course giving us a nice smile as well.

HOLLY: What are your favourite subjects at school?

LUCINDA: Well I really like maths and I'm really, really good at science and I've got two maths certificates.

HOLLY: Really? Hi, James.

LUCINDA: Hello.

JAMES: Hello.

HOLLY: This is Lucinda.

LUCINDA: Hello.

JAMES: Hi, Lucinda.

LUCINDA: When did you decide that you wanted to be a dentist and what's your favourite thing about your job?

JAMES: I decided after I'd been at uni for a few years I wanted to go into a job where you can help people and that's what I love about my job, I get to meet a lot of people and get to help them out if they've got problems and

give them healthy smiles.

HOLLY: Why is it important to spot problems with people's teeth earlier on?

JAMES: It's important because the earlier we can get to problems sometimes it means less treatment is needed later on and it also helps people avoid being in pain.

LUCINDA: How do we find those problems?

JAMES: We do exams of patients regularly and we take things like X-rays which can show us any problems in the teeth and we can also check the health of the gums. Okay, Holly, if you can be our patient and jump in the chair.

HOLLY: Sure.

JAMES: And Lucinda, if you'd like to assist us I've got a coat for you. Primary school and high school in particular I was sort of interested in science so subjects like biology and chemistry in particular they were sort of the ones that particularly got my interest in sort of the health and science areas and they were useful going on into uni.

We recommend most patients come and see a dentist about every six months and it allows just to keep an eye on how things are going, everything's okay and the teeth are all healthy.

Okay, Lucinda, we're going to have a look to see whether there's any plaque on Holly's teeth now. I'll show you how to do that. So I'll just put the chair back and then what you've got there is some special gel which shows us whether there's any plaque on the teeth. Okay, so we're going to put some of this on the teeth, painting it on and then we'll give it a rinse.

Some on the bottom teeth. I'll sit you up, Holly, so you can have a rinse. Some good indicators that we might have healthy teeth would be that the gums are healthy, they're looking normal and also signs that somebody's teeth might be unhealthy might be if the gums might be red or puffy or bleeding. Holly, do you want to take that mirror and Lucinda, do you want to have a look as well.

HOLLY: Oh, man.

JAMES: So what we can see there, areas where the dye is a bit darker and this shows where there might be plaque sitting between the teeth. So we can see it tends to build up where the teeth meet the gums so when we brush our teeth we brush to try and remove as much plaque as we can which is hard to see which is how this gel helps us to show where the plaque is.

LUCINDA: Can you show us the correct way to brush our teeth?

JAMES: Sure, so the correct way to brush our teeth involves some flossing as well. So to floss we get a piece about this long, wrap it between the fingers like this so you can press down and then what we do is we just click it between the teeth and then make sure we wipe all the way around and underneath the tooth, behind and in front, touching the gum and then go to the next tooth. All the way around behind the front where the toothbrush can't reach and that helps get rid of any plaque that might be sitting between the teeth. So then we can go on to the brushing. We want to brush three areas of the teeth. So if you can just open, starting at the back tooth and going around in small circles like that. Going tooth by tooth all the way around until you're finished and then on the outside against the cheeks here, one by one all the way around and then when we're finished to finish off the top teeth backwards and forwards like that on the binding surfaces. Foods that are best for our teeth are ones that are low in sugar and low in acids so if

we can try and keep down the sugary foods and also how often we have sugary foods is important as well.

HOLLY: Can you tell if someone's making good health choices just by looking at their teeth?

JAMES: You can get some ideas if patients have been having diets that have got too much acid in them, things that are too acidic like soft drinks or if they've got diets that have too much sugar, sweets and lollies in them. So a good way of checking whether there might be anything wrong with the teeth is by taking X-rays. So we'll take a couple of X-rays of Holly's teeth right now. So we use this one here which is the film and we'll just sit it next to the teeth. And then if you can keep still we'll line this up like that.

LUCINDA: What can these X-rays tell us about Holly's teeth?

JAMES: They can tell us a few things. These ones in particular will be able to tell us whether there's any tooth decay or any holes in the teeth. If you come out with me we'll press the button and take the X-ray. Consequences of not looking after your teeth can result in gum disease which can sometimes affect the bone that holds the teeth and teeth can become wobbly or sometimes lost so you can end up missing teeth or if you're not looking after your teeth other things that can happen is you can get holes in the teeth.

HOLLY: So are my teeth looking okay?

JAMES: Yeah, your teeth are looking good.

HOLLY: What are some of the common problems that people have with their teeth?

JAMES: Sometimes we see decay in between the teeth, sometimes we can just see decay coming in from the top. Other times people might have gum and bone disease and some people have missing teeth as well.

LUCINDA: What if someone's got a hole in their tooth?

JAMES: Well if we see that on the X-ray with what we can do is usually you can make the tooth numb and go in there and put a filling in that hole to fill it up and then make the tooth all nice and complete again. There's a number of reasons why we take moulds of people's teeth. We can make things such as dentures or mouthguards from them or if we need to have certain work made in a lab that mould gets sent to the lab which we can use to make crowns and bridges as well

HOLLY: So what are some of the options that a patient has if they've lost teeth?

JAMES: They have a few. If they've lost a few teeth they can consider something like a denture which sits in and out of the mouth like that or also they can have a bridge which is where the lab makes a few teeth joined together so it depends on the exam and the assessment we do. Or sometimes if they're just missing one or a few teeth you can do an implant which is a screw that goes into the bone.

JAMES: The course at university involved a range of science subjects, lectures, tutorials and treating patients under supervision and sort of that worked up, they became more frequent as the years went on and in the end we were treating patients regularly towards the end of the course ready for graduation at the end as dentists.

LUCINDA: I'd like to go to university because it's very interesting all the equipment that you can use and helping people with their teeth.

HOLLY: It's so important to care for your teeth. And James has shown us just some of the interesting equipment available in the dental surgery. And I think Lucinda might just head off to university with a dental career in mind.

LOCKIE: Next episode – Holly joins the police force and Bec explores the fascinating world of insects. See you next time. Bye.

VOICE-OVER: If these stories have inspired you then check out our website for activities and loads of information on all of our experts. Plus don't forget to challenge yourself with our Enquiring Minds game.

END OF TRANSCRIPT