

SHARKS4KIDS

TAKE A BITE OUT OF SHARK TEETH:

Why do sharks have different teeth?

Materials:

- One large bowl of water
- A spare toothbrush
- Tweezers
- Pliers
- Pepper
- Gummy Candy (fish shaped is possible!)
- M&M's

Instructions:

1. Fill the large bowl with water and sprinkle pepper, gummies and M&M's inside.
2. Now use you tools (toothbrush, tweezers and pliers) to get the food out. Which tool works best for which food? Can one tool pick up more than one type of food?

Discussion:

Different sharks have different types of teeth to eat different types of food– just like we use different utensils for different types of food. For example, would you use a fork to eat soup?

- The largest sharks such as the whale sharks and basking sharks eat some of the smallest food! Plankton! They have gill rakers that act like the toothbrush to filter through the water and pick up the small animals (pepper.)

- Many sharks like hammerheads, sandtigers and great whites have pointy teeth just like your tweezers. Pointy teeth are useful in grabbing food but not so good with chewing. These sharks swallow their food whole!
- Some sharks, like the nurse sharks or Port Jackson shark have small or flat teeth meant for crushing crabs and lobsters. Your pliers can crush the M&M's just like a nurse shark can crush his or her crustaceous meal!

No matter what type of teeth a shark has, they always have enough! A shark never needs to go to the dentist because his or her teeth just fall out and are replaced by the ones behind. A shark's mouth is like an escalator with teeth growing in the back and continually moving forward. One lemon shark can lose up to 30,000 teeth in a lifetime! So next time you go to the beach, look around. Maybe you'll find a fallen tooth!