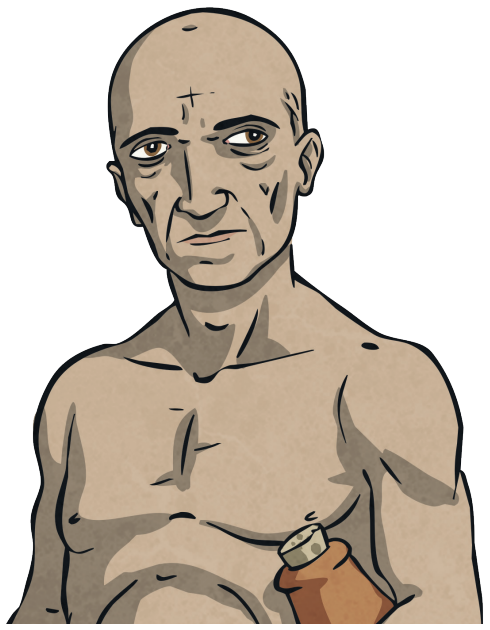
Ancient Egyptian Dentists

Not everyone enjoys a visit to the dentist but imagine you lived 3000-5000 years ago during the age of the ancient Egyptians. Treating toothache was handled slightly differently than it is today...



Dentist! Dentist!

Here's what an Ancient Egyptian dentist might say:

"**Toothache?** Let's have a look... Ah yes, you've got mouth worms."

"**What? Never heard of mouth worms?** They're the cause of all tooth decay!"

"**Need something to take the pain away?** Dangle a dead mouse on your tooth. That should do the trick!"

"**Still aches?** Hmm... well, try praying to the Gods, and if that doesn't work stop being naughty because that's probably what's caused the problem in the first place!"

Dental Hygiene

Toothpaste – this could be a mixture of egg shells and horses' hooves, or sometimes a delicate blend of crushed rocks, mint, salt, pepper and dried iris flowers!

Mouthwash – bran and celery.

Antiseptic paste – incense and onion.

Pain relief – opium (an illegal drug today!).

Main Problems

- Poor diet! Egyptians didn't eat enough vitamins and minerals to keep their teeth and gums healthy!
- Gritty bread! A lot of sand and grit found their way into Egyptian food – especially bread. This wore down the enamel in people's teeth.
- No money! Lots of people couldn't afford to see a dentist so their teeth simply fell out!

1. According to the ancient Egyptians, what do mouth worms cause?

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2. Imagine you were an ancient Egyptian dentist. Using the text, what two things could you suggest if someone had toothache?

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3. Look at the ingredients for toothpaste. Why might some of these ingredients be bad for keeping your teeth and gums healthy?

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4. Look at the main problems section. Pretend you are Pharaoh and come up with one way to improve the health of people's teeth:

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