

Dental Nutrition

Summary

- ❖ The foods we eat can directly impact your oral health.
- ❖ Fluoride can prevent decay by remineralizing teeth.
- ❖ Foods high in sugar (carbohydrates) or acidic foods help to create cavities.
- ❖ Bacteria eat what you eat, so choose wisely.
- ❖ If children require a bottle at night, make sure it is water.
- ❖ Good foods include fruits and vegetables, milk, meat, fish, poultry, nuts and cheese.
- ❖ Avoid candy, cakes, cookies, crackers, chips, juice, soda (diet too because it is acidic).
- ❖ Chewing gum with Xylitol (sugar free) can help cleanse the teeth and help prevent decay.
- ❖ See your dentist frequently for routine maintenance and cleaning.

This information is intended for education purposes only, and is not intended to substitute consultation with your dental professional. This information is offered solely as a supplement for patients of this office.



**“Dentistry with
you in mind”**

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Nutritional Pamphlet

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Nutrition and Dental Health

Nutrition plays a large role in the development and maintenance of a healthy mouth, including the teeth and gums. The food we eat affects our teeth. A healthy diet can help maintain a healthy mouth. On the other hand, a poor diet can lead to a diseased mouth. Good dental health begins early in life and must be practiced throughout life.

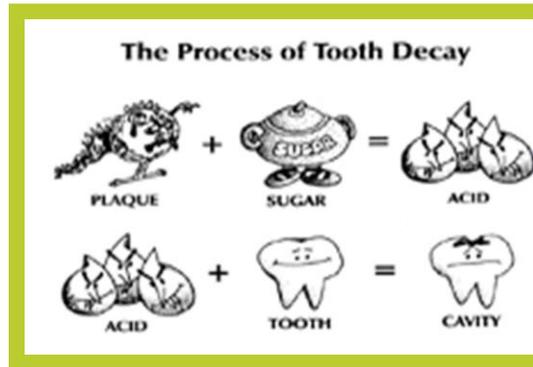
Fluoride and Teeth

Fluoride intake from early childhood has been shown to decrease dental decay by up to 60%. Fluoride mineralization results in stronger teeth, that are resistant to decay. (http://www.dentalgentlecare.com/dental_nutrition.htm)

Bacteria and Decay

Decay happens when bacteria metabolize components in saliva. The components stick to enamel (what we see as plaque). Inside this plaque bacteria can “ferment dietary carbohydrates for a food source.” This process produces acids which with demineralize the tooth, progressing to decay. Decay can lead to pain, tooth loss, bad breath, discoloration, unsightliness, and a negative impact on other health aspects.

Bacteria need carbohydrates for food. A diet high in simple sugars aids bacteria to flourish. Reducing the intake of simple carbohydrates (chips, candy, soft drinks) can help reduce your chance of decay.



Baby Bottle Syndrome

When a child is given a bottle with a carbohydrate liquid (such as juice or milk) and falls asleep with it in their mouth the teeth are coated with food for bacteria. This becomes an excellent feeding ground and attributes to rampant decay. When this happens the child is susceptible to severe pain from decay and an increased numbers of “bad bacteria” that may affect their adult teeth. If baby teeth are lost early this could lead to malalignment.

Food

Bacteria use the carbohydrates we eat as fuel, leading to decay. Sticky foods become lodged in and around teeth and create an environment ideal for decay. “Meats and foods high in fiber, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, help clean the teeth of food particles during the chewing process.” Saliva acts as a protective agent for the teeth. Three meals a day help provide the proper daily intake of nutrients, but snacking between meals can be problematic. Bathing the teeth in sugars all day long does not allow saliva to neutralize acids and can lead to decay. Snacking choices should be made judiciously. .

Food and Decay Potential

High Potential for Decay

- Dried fruits
- Hard and soft candy
- Cake, cookies, pie
- Crackers
- Chips

Moderate Potential For Decay

- Fruit juice
- Sweetened, canned fruit
- Soft drinks
- Breads

Low Potential for Decay

- Raw vegetables
- Raw fruits
- Milk

No Potential for Decay

- Meat, fish, poultry
- Fats, oils

Ability to Stop Decay

- Cheeses
- Xylitol
- Nuts