



# YOUR FOOD CHOICES AND ORAL HEALTH

The foods you choose to eat have a significant effect on your general well-being but also on your teeth and gums. One common concern of many oral health professionals is the high consumption of sugar-filled sodas, sweetened fruit drinks, and non-nutritious snacks that can have detrimental effects on oral health. These kinds of food have very little, if any, nutritional value.

Eating patterns and food decisions among kids and teens are imperative variables that influence how rapidly youths may develop tooth decay. At the point when bacteria come into contact with sugar in the mouth, acid is delivered that attacks the teeth for 20 minutes or more. Consumption of high sugar snacks between meals allows no recovery period in the mouth. The oral environment is very clever in the way it uses saliva to wash away acids and move the pH closer to a healthy range. A healthy consumption of water regularly throughout

the day helps the saliva flow freely. The more often sweet foods and drinks are consumed, the higher the risk of tooth decay. Tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease, but the good news is that it is entirely preventable.

What is the right thing to do?

- Limit sweet foods and drinks and consume them during meal times rather than between meals.

- Aim to consume 3 servings of vegies and 2 servings of fruit every day.

- Choose healthy snacks like fresh fruit, vegetable sticks, natural yoghurt, plain popcorn, soups or cheese.

- Choose fresh fruit over dried fruit, as dried fruit will leave a sticky residue on your teeth and can contribute to tooth decay.

- Drink fluoridated tap water and plain milk instead of soft drinks, energy drinks, flavoured milks, juice or cordial.

- Have a piece of cheese after consuming sweet or acidic food as dairy products assist in reversing the decay process.

- Learn to read food labels to help us choose foods and beverages which are low in added sugar. This added sugar are very much present in soft drinks, candies, cookies, pastries and more.

A lack of certain nutrients in your diet may lead to difficulty for the tissues in the mouth to resist infection and may ultimately lead to major oral health problem like tooth loss. This is believed to progress faster and more severe with older adults who have nutrient-poor diets.

For your oral health, always remember to brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, floss daily and visit your dentist regularly. With regular dental care, your oral health professional can help prevent problems from occurring in the first place and catch problems in the early stages, while they are easy to treat.