



Sugar Effects

How Does Sugar Effect Dental Health?

Tooth decay occurs when bacteria break down sugars and starches in plaque. This forms acid which dissolves the nearby tooth enamel. Much of what children eat causes decay. Sugar is found in cow's milk, milk-based formulas, and even breast milk, which can cause decay. Apple juice, Sunny Delight and other fruit drinks are high in sugars which produce acids that erode tooth enamel.

Frequency - Frequent snacking on foods high in sugar and starches increases the amount of time the teeth are exposed to the dissolving effects of various acids. The frequency of snacking is more important than the amount of the snack. The most common source of sugar is found in soft drinks and juice drinks. Twelve ounces of Coke contains 20 teaspoons of sugar; twelve ounces of many fruit drinks contain 1/4 cup of sugar.

Form - Sticky foods are retained on the teeth and allow a longer time for acid production. High in sugar, sticky foods include peanut butter, fruit snacks, chewing gum, raisins, other dried fruits and many candies. Even starchy foods such as cereals, breads, crackers, pretzels and potato chips may linger in the mouth longer than some sweet foods. Just remember, foods that dissolve/melt are better choices than foods that stick!

To Achieve and Maintain Optimal Dental Health:

- Brush twice a day and (ideally) floss once a day to remove dental plaque. Use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste containing fluoride. Parents should assist children under age 8 with brushing and flossing. Once a child learns how to write cursive, the hand skills needed to be a good brusher are developed.
- Infant gums should be wiped with a damp washcloth or tooth towel after each feeding.
- Do not allow infants to sleep with bottles containing sweetened liquids, fruit juices, milk or formula. Only use water for naps and night-time.
- Eat a balanced diet including fruits and vegetables, protein and dairy products.
- Minimize the number of between-meal snacks eaten each day, and limit sweets and juices to mealtimes.
- Bottled water is okay for adults, but kids should have at least 8 oz. of tap water a day to obtain an adequate amount of fluoride.
- Sugarless chewing gum can help eliminate food particles caught between teeth after a meal and also helps prevent plaque build-up by stimulating saliva production.
- Visit your dentist every 6 months to keep you teeth and gums healthy.

Sugar in Liquid Foods

Regular soft drinks provide youth and young adults with significant amounts of sugar and calories. Both regular and diet sodas affect American's intake of various vitamins and minerals.

FOOD ITEM	PORTION	TSPS OF SUGAR
Beverages:		
Coke, Dr. Pepper....	1 can/12oz....	10 tsp or 40g
Mountain Dew....	8oz....	7 tsp
Sprite....	8oz....	6 ½ tsp
Sunkist Orange....	8oz....	8 ¾ tsp
Sweet Tea....	8oz....	4 ½ tsp
(Instant sweetened with sugar)		

1 Teaspoon Sugar = approximately 4 grams

12 Teaspoons = ¼ cup



What to Drink Instead of Soft Drinks....

- Water
- Orange, grapefruit, white grape and other diluted juices
- Milk
- Crystal Light

The Sweet Facts

Most parents are confident that their children are eating very few sweets. But sugar is hard to avoid. Some percentage is found in almost everything we eat.

Commercial breakfast cereals in particular contain a large amount of sucrose and glucose. Sucrose is a sugar refined from sugar cane and beets. The glucose is sweet syrup drawn from fruit starches. Both of these are prevalent to some extent in all breakfast cereals.

But sugars are also found in many other foods children enjoy. If you are not sure about the sugar content of a product, read the label. Ingredients are listed relative to the amount in the product. Therefore, if sugar is listed first, there is more of it than any other ingredient.



Dietary Control of Dental Decay

The following are examples of food containing large quantities of sugar. This is NOT a complete list, so when food shopping please be label conscious. Learn to read labels to know the sugar content of each serving, look for the words “high-fructose corn syrup” or sugar per serving in that food. When shopping for snacks, remember that raw fruits and vegetables are the best choices. When that isn't possible, substitute with an artificially-sweetened snack.

Try to avoid...

Apple and other fruit
juices
Soft Drinks
Chocolate milk

Jams and jellies
Sugar coated cereals
Donuts and pastries
Candy, chewing gum

Fruit Roll-ups/Fruit
snacks
Raisins/dried fruits

Good choices...

Nuts (after age 3)
Popcorn (not sugar
coated)
Sugarless gum, candy,
drinks

Fresh fruit
Hard boiled eggs
Bologna, Salami
Low sugar cereals
Cooked cereals

Pasta
Cheese
Bread, Baguette
Fresh Vegetables

Foods best eaten with meals...

Milk drinks, milkshakes
Canned fruit
Dried fruit
Applesauce

Fruit juices
Peanut butter
Potato and Corn chips
Ice cream

Desserts-cookies, pies,
cakes, pudding

Instead of...

Fruit Juices or fruit drinks
Soft drinks
Hi-C or Kool-Aid
Sweet tea & other sweetened drinks
Donut or Pop Tart
Cookies
Candy (sticky)

Fruit Roll-ups or dried fruits
High sugar cereal

Try...

Fruit flavored water without sugar added
Artificially sweetened varieties
Kool-Aid mix with artificial sweeteners
Crystal Light
Toast or bagel without jelly
Fruit, lower sugar varieties-graham crackers
Nuts, popcorn (not sugar coated), crackers,
cheese, ice cream, popsicles, pudding and juice
Fresh fruit and vegetables
Oatmeal and other cooked cereals