

GOOD DIET FOR DENTAL HEALTH

How can your diet affect your teeth?

Whenever you eat or drink anything sugary, your teeth are under acid attack for up to one hour thereafter. It is therefore important to keep sugary foods to mealtimes only as this limits the amount of time your mouth is under attack.

What happens to the sugar you eat?

Within two minutes of sugar entering the mouth, it is converted into acid by the action of germs which are present in the mouth. Germs are found in higher quantities in plaque. Plaque is the yellowish-white collection on teeth.

When should you brush your teeth?

You should brush your teeth at least twice a day. The best time to do this is before breakfast and last thing at night. It is not advisable to brush your teeth straight after eating, as the acids in foods weaken the enamel on teeth and therefore brushing can cause tiny particles of enamel to brush away. It is therefore best to brush your teeth at least 30 minutes after eating.

How do you know if there is sugar in what you are eating? What about acidic drinks?

You can see if there is sugar in foods by looking at the labels on packets. Beware of the following forms of sugar: sucrose, fructose, dextrose, glucose syrup, honey, corn syrup, invert sugar syrup, molasses, treacle and maltose.

Acidic drinks (Carbonated drinks including diet drinks and fizzy water, orange juice, apple juice) can also dissolve your tooth surface. Tooth surface loss will adversely affect appearance of teeth and cause sensitivity.

The following is a list of foods that contain no or little sugar

Drinks	Fillings/Toppings	Yoghurts
Water	Meat and fish spreads	Sugar Free or Lite yoghurts are all OK to eat. Most supermarkets have their own brands. These contain sweeteners.
Tea/Coffee without sugar	Cold Meat	
Milk (<i>Children under 5 should be given full fat</i>)	Eggs	
Sugar free squash. (<i>Although these have no sugar, they are still acidic due to the fruit in them, so should not be drunk in excess</i>)	Tinned fish	Confectionary
Diet drinks (<i>These contain artificial sugar</i>)	Marmite	Sugar Free Chewing Gum
	Bovril	Sugar Free Mints
	Sugar free Peanut Butter	Sugar Free Sweets
	Cheese	
	Cheese Spread	Alternative Sweeteners
Snacks		In the form of tablets or granules
Toast	Fruit and Vegetables	Nutria Sweet
Rolls	Fruit (<i>although it contains sugar, it is a good alternative to biscuits or cakes</i>)	Candarell
Sandwiches	Apples	Boots Shapers
Pita Bread	Bananas	Hermasetas
French Bread	Pears	Sweetex
Cheese Scones	Oranges (<i>these should not be eaten in excess as they contain acids</i>)	
Cream Crackers	Vegetables	
Twiglets	Nuts (<i>not suitable for children under 5</i>)	
Crunchy Sticks	NB – Dried fruit e.g sultanas, raisins, are high in sugar. Muesli bars are also often high in sugar	
Wotsits		
Hula Hoops		