

WHY IS A HEALTHY DIET IMPORTANT FOR MY ORAL HEALTH?

Your teeth are under acid attack for up to one hour every time you eat or drink anything sugary. This is because sugar reacts with bacteria in plaque (the sticky coating on your teeth) and produces harmful acids. So it's important to keep sugary foods only to mealtimes, thereby limiting the amount of time your mouth is at risk.

Acidic foods and drinks can be just as harmful to your teeth. Acid erodes the enamel exposing the dentine underneath. This can make your teeth both sensitive and unsightly.

A diet that is rich in vitamins, minerals and fresh produce can help to prevent gum disease. Gum disease causes bad breath and can lead to tooth loss.



WHAT IS TOOTH DECAY?

Tooth decay damages your teeth and leads to fillings or even extractions. Decay happens when sugar reacts with the bacteria in plaque. This creates acids that attack your teeth, destroying enamel. After this happens repeatedly, the tooth enamel may break down forming a hole or 'cavity' into the dentine. The tooth can then decay more quickly.

SHOULD I BRUSH MY TEETH AFTER EVERY MEAL?

It is important that you brush twice a day with a toothpaste containing fluoride. The best times are at breakfast time and the last thing at night before you go to bed.

Brushing before going to bed is especially important as the flow of saliva, which is the mouth's own cleaning system, slows down during the night leaving the mouth more at risk from decay.



DOES CHEWING GUM HELP?

Chewing gum makes your mouth produce saliva, which helps neutralise the acids in your mouth after eating or drinking. It has been proven that using sugar-free chewing gum after meals can prevent tooth decay. However it is important to only use sugar-free gum as ordinary gum contains sugar which may damage your teeth.

WHAT FOODS CAUSE TOOTH DECAY?

All sugars can cause decay. Sugar comes in many forms, for example: sucrose, fructose and glucose are just three types. All sugars can cause damage to your teeth.

Many processed foods contain sugar, and the higher up it appears in the list of ingredients means that there is more sugar in the product. Always read the list of ingredients on labels when you are food shopping.

It is important to note that 'no added sugar' does not necessarily mean that the product is sugar free. It simply means that no extra sugar was added.

Acidic food and drinks can cause decay. Listed below are the 'pH values' of some food and drinks. The lower the pH number the more acidic the product. Anything with a pH value lower than 5 may cause tooth erosion.



mineral water	pH 7.6
(still)	pH 6.9
milk	pH 5.9
cheddar cheese	pH 4.4
beer	pH 3.8

grapefruit/oranges	pH 3.3
pickles	pH 3.2
cola	pH 2.5
wine	pH 2.5
vinegar	pH 2.0



CAN I EAT SNACKS?

It is better for your teeth and general health if you eat three meals a day instead of seven to ten snack attacks. If you do snack between meals, choose foods that do not contain sugar. Fruit contains acids which can erode your teeth, however this is only damaging if you eat unusually large amounts of fruit.

If you do eat fruit as a snack, try to eat something less acidic such as cheese afterwards. Savoury snacks are better, such as:

- nuts
- breadsticks
- cheese
- raw vegetables

CAN I EAT SWEETS?

The main point to remember is that it is not the amount of sugar you eat or drink, but how often you do it. Sweet foods are allowed, but it is important to keep them to meal times.

Sugary foods also contribute to a range of other health problems including heart disease, diabetes and obesity.



WHAT SHOULD I DRINK?

Still water and milk are good choices. It is better for your teeth if you only drink fruit juices at meal times. If you do drink them between meals, try diluting them with water.

Diluted sugar-free squashes are the safest alternative to water and milk. If you make squash or cordial, be sure that the ratio is 1 part cordial to 10 parts water. Some soft drinks contain sweeteners making them unsuitable for young children. Please ask if you are unsure.

Fizzy drinks increase the risk of dental problems. Sugar causes decay while the acid in both normal and diet drinks can dissolve the enamel on your teeth. The risk is higher when you have these drinks between meals.

Diamond Dental Care & Implant Centre is dedicated to promoting a high standard of quality in both dentistry and customer care. We have created a relaxed and inviting environment for you to visit and a comfortable and enjoyable workplace for us to work in.

Our priority is to achieve and maintain your dental health. We take great care in helping you understand any treatment in terms of benefit to you as well as time and costs involved.

If there is anything that you wish to discuss with us, please call us on (07) 5477 0889. Alternatively you can send us a question by email from info@diamonddentalcare.com.au at any time.

We look forward to seeing you!

