

Foods for Healthy Teeth

What you eat and drink affects the health of your teeth and gums

Avoid sugar

If you eat foods that contain sugar you are at risk for tooth decay. Avoiding sugar is the best dietary decision you can make for your dental health!

Sugary foods and beverages that contribute to tooth decay:

- Soft drinks
- Juices
- Candy
- Cookies and pastries
- Breakfast cereals
- Ice cream and yogurt
- Flavored milk



Eat healthy for healthy mouth

Read the nutrition facts and ingredient labels on foods and beverages. Choose foods and beverages that are lowest in sugar. Instead of soft drinks and juices drink plenty of water that contains fluoride. Talk to your dentist, hygienist, physician, or a registered dietitian for suggestions on eating a healthy diet.

Lack of certain nutrients may contribute to gum disease. Severe gum disease is a major cause of tooth loss in adults. Eat a variety of foods from each of the five major food groups, including:

- Whole grains
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Lean sources of protein such as lean beef, skinless poultry, and fish; dry beans, peas, and other legumes
- Low-fat and fat-free dairy foods

Limit snacking

It's not only what you eat but when you eat that is important for dental health. Foods eaten as part of a meal cause less harm to teeth than snacking throughout the day.

Limit between-meal snacks. If you do snack, choose something healthy like:

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- A piece of cheese

Vitamins can support a healthy mouth

- **Vitamin D** strengthens teeth and bones and is found in dairy foods.
- **Vitamin B** helps make healthy gums and is in breads and cereals
- **Vitamin C** keeps your gums healthy and is found in fruits and vegetables

In addition to limiting sugars and snacking, keep brushing

- Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste
- Floss daily
- Visit your dentist regularly
- Drink water that contains fluoride

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in children. Fortunately, tooth decay is preventable.

Resources



To learn more about what foods are best for you, visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov), a website from the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

If you are on a special diet, follow your physician's advice when choosing foods.