

Diet Advice to maintain healthy teeth

Not only is a healthy and balanced diet crucial in maintain health, it is also important to consider the impact of the diet on the health of the teeth. Certain aspects of the diet can damage the teeth and increase the chance of tooth decay. A few careful changes to the diet, alongside good oral health, can help to prevent problems occurring.

To help prevent damage to the teeth you should reduce the amount of sugar in the diet. Sugar is cause of tooth decay and it is the **frequency of consumption**, not the amount of sugar that is the issue. Therefore you should:

- Aim to keep all sugar to meal times, where the sugar will have less impact on the teeth.
- Avoid sugary snacks, instead opting for sugar free snacks such as breadsticks, cheese or vegetable snacks such as celery or cucumber.
- Avoid drinking sugary drinks, aim to drink milk or water only in-between meals.
- Not add sugar to tea/coffee.
- Be careful about hidden sugars- in food and drinks, even ~~no~~ added sugar products will contain natural sugars, and lots of products contain sugar when you would not expect them too- such as crisps.
- Added sugars should provide less than 10% of total energy in the diet. This is around 60g per person per day or for young children this 30g per day.

As well as sugar it is also important to consider acidic foods. These can cause tooth erosion, leading to thinning of the teeth and sensitivity. To reduce the risk of this:

- Avoid acidic foods and drinks where possible. These include fruit juices, fruit (especially citrus fruits) as well as carbonated drinks.
- If drinking fizzy drinks drink them through a straw to reduce the impact on the teeth.
- Avoid brushing the teeth directly after having acidic foods or drinks, instead rinse out with water or a fluoride mouthwash.