



Healthy People Dental

Diet and Dental Health

Your body is a complex machine. The foods you choose and how often you eat them can affect your general health and the health of your teeth and gums, too. If you consume too many sugar-filled sodas, sweetened fruit drinks or non-nutritious snacks, you could be at risk for tooth decay. Tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease, but the good news is that it is entirely preventable. Tooth decay happens when plaque come into contact with sugar in the mouth, causing acid to attack the teeth.

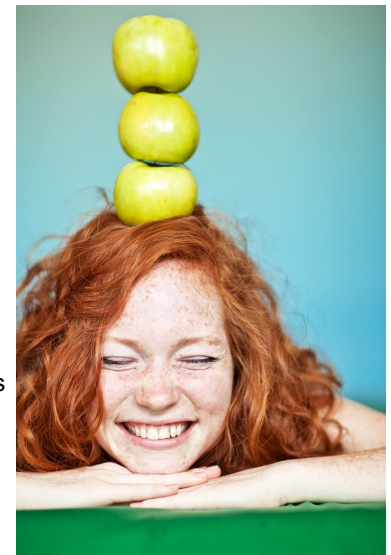
Foods that contain sugars of any kind can contribute to tooth decay. To control the amount of sugar you eat, read the nutrition facts and ingredient labels on foods and beverages and choose options that are lowest in sugar. Common sources of sugar in the diet include soft drinks, candy, cookies and pastries. Your physician or a registered dietitian can also provide suggestions for eating a nutritious diet. If your diet lacks certain nutrients, it may be more difficult for tissues in your mouth to resist infection. This may contribute to gum disease. Severe gum disease is a major cause of tooth loss in adults. Many researchers believe that the disease progresses faster and is potentially more severe in people with poor nutrition.

To learn what foods are best for you, visit ChooseMyPlate.gov, a website from the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, an agency of U.S. Department of Agriculture. The site contains dietary recommendations for children and adults based on their levels of physical activity.

Wise choices

For good dental health, keep these tips in mind when choosing your meals and snacks:

- Drink plenty of water.
- 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 the number of snacks you eat. If you do snack, choose something that is healthy like fruit or vegetables or a piece of cheese. Foods that are eaten as part of a meal cause less harm to teeth than eating lots of snacks throughout the day, because more saliva is released during a meal. Saliva helps wash foods from the mouth and lessens the effects of acids, which can harm teeth and cause cavities.



For good dental health, always remember to brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste that has the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance, floss daily and visit your dentist regularly. With regular dental care, your dentist can help prevent oral problems from occurring in the first place and catch those that do occur in the early stages, while they are easy to treat.

Healthy Mouth Recipe

Healthy 7 Layer Dip

- 3 Cups black beans
- 6 Oz. Greek yogurt (plain)
- 1 Cup shredded cheese
- 1 small can sliced black olives
- Guacamole:
- 2 avocados
- 2 Tbsp. chopped cilantro
- 1 chopped chive
- Juice from 1/2 lime
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 1/2 seeded and diced Jalapeño
- Pico De Gallo:**
- 2 small diced tomatoes
- 2 Tbsp. chopped cilantro
- Juice from 1/2 lime
- 1/2 seeded and diced Jalapeño
- 1 chopped chive

How it's done:

1. Mix together all ingredients for the pico de gallo.
2. In a separate bowl, mix the ingredients for the guacamole layer.
3. The ingredients can be added in the following order (starting at the bottom): beans, yogurt, cheese, olives, guacamole, pico de gallo.

What makes it tooth friendly:

This dish has it all and it's a great update of what is usually a calorie dense snack. While tomato and citrus juices can be tough on your teeth because of their high acidity, the cheese and Greek yogurt help to balance that out. Plus, this dish is high in vitamins E, A and C, which are all essential for a healthy mouth. Choosing celery or another vegetable over chips would make this an even better choice for your teeth.

