

BE PROUD OF YOUR MOUTH

Eat a balanced, low-sugar diet

Why it is important

Eating a well-balanced diet that is low in sugar is good for oral health. It can also help prevent other diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer and obesity.

Most oral health conditions are largely preventable and can be treated in their early stages. Maintaining good oral health has a positive impact on your general health, well-being and quality of life.

Understanding the problem

There are different forms of dietary sugars, which include sugars and free sugars.



FACT

Eating excessive amounts of sugar from snacks, processed foods, and drinks not only causes tooth decay, but is a major contributor to obesity and increases the risk of diabetes.



FACT

Sugar is the number one cause of tooth decay (dental caries), which is the most common health condition globally.

Free sugars are the main problem. These are sugars that are added to foods and drinks or are naturally present in honey, syrups, fruit juices and fruit juice concentrates. It does not include sugars that are naturally present in whole fruits, vegetables and milk.

Confectionery, cakes, biscuits, sweetened cereals, sweet desserts and jams/preserves are common sources of free sugars as well as sugary drinks, e.g. soda, fruit juices, energy and sports drinks.

Sugars and acids weaken tooth enamel increasing the risk of tooth decay, which can lead to discomfort and pain, and impact every aspect of life, such as chewing, speaking and having the confidence to interact with others.

What you can do

Eat a well-balanced diet that is low in sugar and high in fruit and vegetables.

Adults should have no more than six teaspoons of sugar daily; for children it's three.

- Beware of sugars added to foods and drinks by manufacturers.
- Pay close attention to how much sugar you are adding when preparing your own meals.
- Avoid 'empty calories'. Sugary drinks, such as soda, juice, energy and sports drinks, are a main source of empty calories, which contain high levels of energy and no nutritional value.
- Do not eat sugary snacks and treats in-between meals. Having sugar throughout the day increases the risk of developing tooth decay.
- Favour water as your main drink. Consuming sugary drinks regularly (almost one can a day) is not only bad for your mouth, it increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.



Good oral health can help you live a longer, healthier life

For more information, visit www.worldoralhealthday.org

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