



Eat for Your Teeth

Diet, Nutrition and
Oral Health Information



Good dental health like good general health relies on having healthy eating habits. Our teeth can be affected as much by our diet, as by not brushing our teeth regularly. Modern diets can be high in sugar, fats and salt, impacting on both general and oral health.

Eat for Your Teeth

Adding sugar to our drinks is an obvious source of added sugar. However, a much larger source of added sugar is hidden in processed foods such as cakes, sweets, biscuits, ice-cream etc.

ADDED SUGAR = empty calories
SUGAR = no vitamins, no minerals, no protein, no fibre
TOO MUCH SUGAR TOO OFTEN = tooth decay

Key Tips

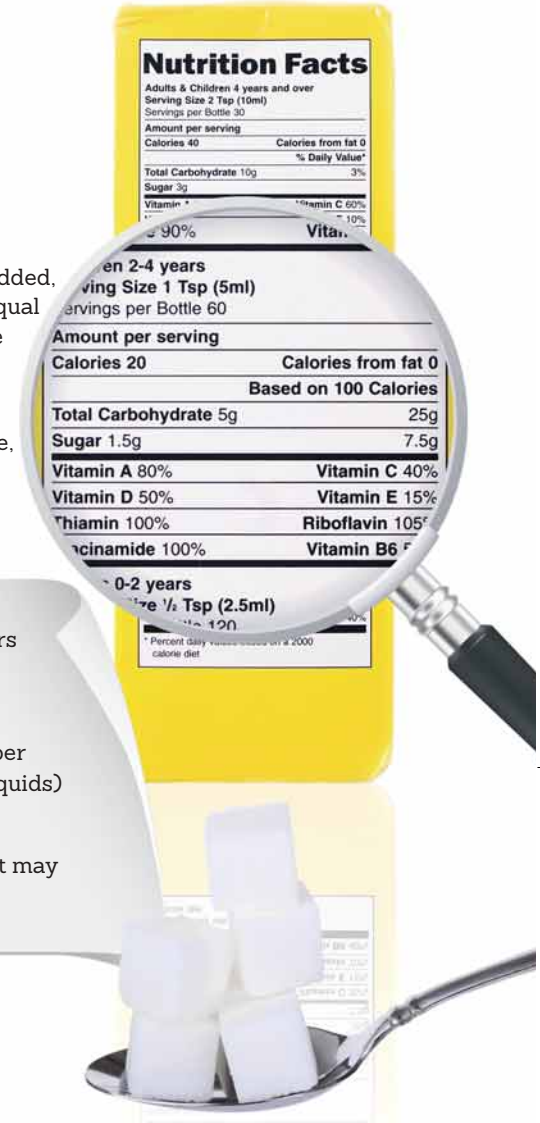
- ➔ Eat whole grains like brown rice, whole wheat bread and whole grain pasta.
- ➔ Fish, poultry, beans and nuts are all examples of healthy protein.
- ➔ Eat dairy products in moderation.
- ➔ Avoid sweets, biscuits and cakes, as they are high in sugar and lead to decay.
- ➔ Limit fizzy drinks and acidic fruit juices as they are harmful to teeth and lead to erosion.

Reading labels and hidden sugars

When reading the labels on food packets, it is important to know how much sugar has been added, but it is easy to get confused. 4.2g of sugar is equal to 1 teaspoon. The higher the sugar content, the closer it appears to the start of the label.

Sugar may be described as different names on labels and they all add up. So beware of sucrose, glucose, lactose, galactose, dextrose, maltose, demerara, brown sugar, maple sugar, honey, molasses or treacle syrup.

- ➔ **Sugar Free (EU Directive)**
Product contains no more than 0.5g of sugars per 100g or 100ml
- ➔ **Low Sugars (EU Directive)**
Product contains no more than 5g of sugar per 100g (Solids) or 2.5 g sugar per 100 mls (Liquids)
- ➔ **No Added sugar (EU Directive)**
No food added for sweetening properties but may state "contains naturally occurring sugar"



Oral health and our diet

To prevent cavities and maintain good oral health, what you eat and how often you eat are important factors. Changes in your mouth start immediately after you eat certain foods i.e. sugars.

Bacteria in the mouth convert sugars from the foods you eat into acids which attack the enamel on teeth, starting the decay process. The more often you eat and snack, the more frequently you are exposing your teeth to the cycle of decay.



Healthy Eating Tips

Whether you are looking for an energy boost, something sweet or just want to boost your nutrients, eat a piece of fresh fruit at meal times.

- Teach your taste buds! Cut down and gradually reduce the amount of sugar in teas, coffees and cooking. Consuming sugary food and drink frequently during the day feeds the bacteria in our mouths leading to dental decay. Try to limit snacks to meal times.
- Beware of foods with hidden sugars and learn how to identify them in labels.
- Be careful not to consume fruit too many times during the day as this may lead to dental erosion.
- After eating acidic foods like fruit or fruit drinks, wait for about an hour before brushing your teeth to allow the tooth enamel to re-harden naturally through the action of saliva.

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