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Nutrition

Did you know that proper nutrition is not just important for your overall health but your oral health as well?

Eating right and maintaining a proper diet will ensure your teeth and gums stay happy, and healthy.

Hidden Dangers

Like many things in our life, sugar is OK in moderation but what if what you're eating and drinking secretly contains more sugar than you think? Sugar is a form of carbohydrate and the most common source of energy in foods. Carbohydrates occur in fruits and vegetables and make up important components in milk and other dairy foods. Although it is a common misconception that naturally occurring sugar is OK consumer beware Natural sugar can be equally as harmful to your teeth as manufactured grain sugar. At the end of the day, sugar-is-sugar.

Sports and energy drinks, fruit juices and soda all contain acids that attack tooth enamel and help rot your teeth. Even drinks listed as sugar-free can help contribute to tooth decay. These types of drinks coat your teeth with sugar or other sweeteners which stays there all day.

So what can you do to combat these hidden dangers?

- Drink water throughout the day including immediately after drinking any of these hidden dangers to wash away some of the sweeteners left behind.
- Don't brush your teeth for at least an hour after drinking any of these dangers as the acid from the beverage softens your tooth enamel so brushing can be harmful.

Ingredients ending in "ose" typically indicate sugar. For example: sucrose, fructose, dextrose. Also look for maple syrup, molasses, turbinado, amazake and carob powder on an ingredient list. The earlier sugar is listed in the ingredients, the more the product contains. The nutritional content label also lists the amount of sugar per serving.

Sugar and Sugar Substitutes

A little sugar is not always a bad thing, but in some circumstances, sugar can be detrimental to your oral health by dissolving the enamel on teeth. Each time you eat a snack containing sugar, the resulting acid attack can last up to 20 minutes. The naturally-occurring bacteria in the mouth use sugar as energy to multiply and stick themselves to the surface of a tooth. Over time, this turns into plaque and continues to eat away at the tooth's enamel. Tiny holes will eventually be made in the enamel. These are cavities. Left untreated cavities will continue to grow.

Children and adults should consume no more than 10% of their daily calories in sugar.

[Click on this link to see the average daily calorie consumption, by age group and sex, household population aged 5 or older, Canada excluding territories.](#)