

DIETARY CHOICES FOR HEALTHY TEETH!

HOW CHILDREN EAT IS IMPORTANT!

- 1) Eating snacks should be **completed within 20 minutes!** This is to reduce the amount of time bacteria are able to use the carbohydrates your child eats.
- 2) **Every snack or meal should be separated by at least 2-3 hours.** That includes mini-snacks, a mouthful of puffs, or a sip of juice! Grazing does not allow the body to naturally clean and restore teeth (with lips/tongue and saliva) because that process takes over 2 hours to complete. **Water only between snacks!**
- 3) **Food or drinks should not be given just before bedtime!** Teeth are most vulnerable at night, and allowing children to eat at bedtime without clearing the crumbs allows foods to damage teeth for as long as your child sleeps!

WHAT CHILDREN EAT IS ALSO IMPORTANT!



The "stickiness" of the food or how long the food adheres to teeth

- "Dried" foods are 9x stickier than "fresh" foods! (i.e. dried fruits can cause more cavities than fresh fruit; crackers can cause more cavities than buttered toast).
- Food that takes a long time to eat may cause more cavities than food that is quickly eaten.



The carbohydrate content or type of sugar

- "Carbohydrates" on a food's nutrition label can be changed in the mouth into sugar!
- "Processed" sugars are worse for teeth than "natural" sugars. However, **natural or organic sugars can still cause cavities!**



The acidity of the food

- Sour or bitter foods may be high in acids. These include sodas, sour candy, some fruit, and sports drinks.
- An acidic environment in the mouth can encourage the growth of cavity causing bacteria.



Won't Cause Cavities

- Raw, Crunchy Vegetables
- Raw, Leafy Vegetables
- Cheese
- Nuts
- 100% Nut butters
- All Meats
- All Fats
- Water
- Eggs



Usually Won't Cause Cavities

- Whole Milk
- Fresh Fruit
- Whole Grain Bread
- Popcorn
- Smoothies
- Dark Chocolate
- Yogurt
- Ice Cream
- Dips/Sauces
- Oatmeal



Easily Causes Cavities

- Crackers
- Candy
- Soda
- Juice
- Chocolate Milk
- Cookies
- Dried Fruit
- Fruit Snacks/Strips
- Dried Flour Cereals
- Pretzels/Chips
- Sports Drinks
- Acidic Fruit (like lemons)

