

Dental Health for Children

Nutrition & dental health are important for overall health.

Nutrition and diet can impact dental health, causing **cavities** and **dental erosion** – both of which are especially common in children.

Cavity (aka “tooth decay” or “dental caries”) is the damaged area on the hard surface of a tooth that develops into a hole. A cavity is caused by a combination of factors including bacteria in the mouth, frequent (unhealthy) snacking, sipping sugary drinks and not brushing teeth well.

Dental erosion is the wearing away of teeth enamel by acidic foods and beverages such as tomatoes and soft drinks. Unlike a cavity, erosion is not caused by bacteria.



The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends brushing teeth for children when the first tooth erupts using a grain of rice-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste until age three. After age three, most children can use a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste.

Nutrients for good dental health

Calcium (protects/rebuilds tooth enamel):
Dairy (Cow's Milk, Yogurt & Cheese) | Foods Fortified with Calcium | Leafy Greens | Almonds

Phosphorous (protects/rebuild tooth enamel):
Meat | Poultry | Fish | Milk | Eggs

Vitamin A (builds tooth enamel):
Liver | Fatty Fish | Eggs | Cheese | Butter

Vitamin C: (supports healthy gums/healing):
Strawberries | Kiwi | Red Pepper | Broccoli | Kale | Tomatoes

Foods & beverages that cause poor dental health

Sugar Beets | Sugar Cane | Soda | Candy | Baked Goods | Sweetened Fruit Juice | Canned Fruit In Sugar Syrup | Fruit-Flavored Drinks | Sports Drinks | Sweetened Tea | Coffee Drinks | Flavored Water | Energy Drinks

Water is the best beverage of choice for supporting dental health. Fluoridated water is preferable since fluoride protects teeth from decay.

Dental Floss

As soon as two teeth are touching, dental floss should be used daily to remove plaque and debris from between a child's teeth.

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