

A Balanced Diet

This information is to help inform you about a healthy diet, and how it affects your teeth.

Your Daily Diet:

Your body needs a balanced diet to run well. The foods you eat and how much of them you eat affect your overall health, including your teeth and gums. A balanced diet is made of protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, fat, and water, which include an assortment of foods that gives your body what it needs. Your diet should include the recommended amounts of bread, dairy, vegetables, and fruit. A good way to get these amounts is by following a food guide pyramid. Fat, oil, and sweet intake should be limited.

How Diet Affects Your Teeth:

If your diet is lacking certain nutrients, it becomes harder for the tissues in your mouth to be able to fight getting an infection. This may contribute to you acquiring periodontal disease, more commonly known as gum disease. This disease is a major cause of tooth loss in adults. Poor nutrition is not the actual cause of periodontal disease, but it is found the disease will progress more quickly and can be more severe if your diet does not supply necessary nutrients.

When children do not have a proper diet, their teeth may not develop correctly, making them more susceptible to tooth decay. Protein, vitamins, minerals, phosphorus, proper levels of fluoride, and especially calcium help children develop strong decay-resistant teeth.

What Causes Tooth Decay:

Plaque is the thin, sticky film that is constantly forming on teeth. Whenever you eat or drink anything with sugars and starches, the bacteria in the plaque produce acids that contact with your teeth. After there are so many attacks, the enamel on your teeth breaks down and will form a cavity. If the plaque is not removed by cleaning the teeth, eventually it hardens into tartar or calculus. Tartar forms near the gum line, and makes it difficult to keep your teeth clean. Your gums may become irritated and inflamed, swollen, and may bleed. If you often eat or drink foods that are sugary and starchy, and you don't bother to clean your teeth, the result may be tooth decay, gum disease, and possibly tooth loss.

Good Eating Habits:

To help you become more aware of your eating habits, keep a record of all food consumption for 7 days. Compare your journal with the food pyramid. It may be helpful to read food labels, as many processed foods contain added sugar.

How often you snack and the length of time food is in your mouth play a role in tooth decay. Some research has shown that certain foods, such as cheese, peanuts, and sugar-free chewing gum may be helpful in counteracting the effects of acid-producing bacteria.

Preventing Tooth Decay:

A healthy beautiful smile depends on more than just your diet. Follow some of these tips to help maintain healthy teeth and gums.

- ❖ Good home dental care- brush and floss as directed
- ❖ Limit your between meals snacks
- ❖ Schedule regular dental checkup and professional cleanings