

SNACKS & DENTAL HEALTH

Hints for Parents & Kids



Snacking is important for children. They have small tummies and growing bodies that need lots of energy. Offering a child healthy snacks between meals helps meet both energy and nutrient needs. Keeping dental health in mind as you plan your child's snacks is important too. Look at the tips and information below for ideas!



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FOLLOW THESE TIPS FOR HEALTHY SNACKS EVERY DAY

1 Plan 2 or 3 snacks each day

Offer snacks at the same time every day to help prevent nibbling throughout the day – this helps reduce the risk of tooth decay.

2 Offer healthy foods for snacks

Choose foods from at least 2 food groups* when planning snacks. Avoid soft, sticky sweets that get stuck in teeth such as candy, toffee & rolled-up fruit snacks or fruit leather.

*Offer snacks that include vegetables & fruit, grain products, milk & alternatives or meat & alternatives.

3 Offer a variety of snacks

Plan different snacks every day. Include wholesome foods like nuts, milk, whole grain cereal & crackers, yogurt, fruit, meat, eggs and cheese.



4 Make offering healthy snacks easy - keep lots of great food choices on hand!



Good Sense SNACK IDEAS

...easy to prepare and fun to eat!

- ❑ Cheese cut in fun shapes on crackers
- ❑ "Jiffy Pizza": toasted English muffin & pizza sauce with cheese & veggies
- ❑ A rainbow of raw or partially cooked veggies & yogurt dip
- ❑ Chocolate milk & graham crackers
- ❑ Peanut butter on whole grain crackers
- ❑ Pita bread & hummus (chickpea dip)
- ❑ Yogurt & fresh fruit
- ❑ Dried fruit & nut mix
- ❑ Oven baked pita chips & salsa
- ❑ Whole grain cereal with milk
- ❑ Apple or pear slices & cheese
- ❑ Soft tortilla & cheese, folded and heated



DID YOU KNOW?

- ❑ Preschoolers get nearly 1/3 of their energy from snacks each day.
- ❑ Offering snacks at the same time each day can help prevent overeating.
- ❑ It can take several "tries" for a child to accept a new food. Try offering a new food with a familiar food... and be patient!



SNACK IDEA

Shake-a-Pudding

1/2 cup (125 mL) milk
3 Tbsp (45 mL) instant pudding mix
(must be instant)

Place ingredients in a small jar; leave the jar half empty for shaking. Tighten the lid well. Shake about 2 minutes until thickened. Ready to eat!

This is an easy, fun recipe your child can shake up themselves!



TO KEEP A HEALTHY SMILE



- Brush every morning and every night for 2 minutes (use a timer when children begin brushing on their own).
 - Brush after a child's last snack before bed.
 - Clean the surfaces of teeth and along the gumline where plaque collects.
- Floss children's teeth daily as soon as there is contact between teeth.
- If you can't brush after a meal or snack - eat a piece of cheese, rinse your mouth with water or chew a piece of sugarless gum.
- Remember that sugary foods should only be eaten once in a while.
- See your dentist every 6 months ...don't wait until there is a problem!

**Brush your child's teeth until they are 8 years of age.
Monitor brushing when children begin brushing on their own.**

SALIVA to the Rescue!

Saliva is our natural defense against tooth decay. It helps to neutralize the acid produced by plaque and "re-mineralizes" teeth. Saliva flow is highest during meal-times, low between meals and almost zero when we sleep.

What causes TOOTH DECAY?

Cavities begin when the bacteria in the plaque on teeth mixes with the sugar or starch in food. This produces acid that can eat away tooth enamel causing tooth decay - especially at night when saliva flow is very low. Cavity producing acid bathes teeth for about 20 minutes every time you eat starchy or sugary foods.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Choose foods that don't stick to teeth.
- Eat sticky, sweet or sugary foods at mealtime when there is more saliva in the mouth to help wash sugars away.
- Brush teeth at least 2 times each day (morning and night) to remove food particles and plaque.
- Offer no more than 2 or 3 snacks between meals each day.
- Drink water throughout the day to increase saliva flow and flush food particles from teeth.



DID YOU KNOW?

Sipping soft drinks, energy drinks and other sugary beverages over long periods of time can do permanent damage to tooth enamel.

ACID ATTACK!

Some foods and beverages themselves are high in acid – acid that is strong enough to wear away tooth enamel. Every time you consume these foods, enamel becomes softer for a short time. Saliva will slowly neutralize the acid and help re-mineralize teeth. If these attacks happen too often, the teeth do not have a chance for repair and enamel is slowly lost from the tooth surface.

What foods are high enough in acid to damage teeth?

Carbonated soft drinks (even diet drinks) are the number one culprit. Fruit drinks, energy drinks, fruit & fruit juice (e.g. apple, orange) are also high in acid.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Eat high acid foods at meal time when saliva flow is high.
- Eat cheese or drink milk to neutralize the acid in the food.
- Consume beverages quickly without swishing them around the mouth.
- Limit consumption of soft drinks.
- Chew sugar free gum sweetened with *Xylitol* to help neutralize acid and increase saliva flow.
- Drink water throughout the day to increase saliva flow.

Avoid EARLY CHILDHOOD Tooth Decay

Early childhood tooth decay in infants and toddlers is the tragic result of babies sleeping with bottles in their mouths or toddlers drinking from sippy cups for a long time.

INFANTS

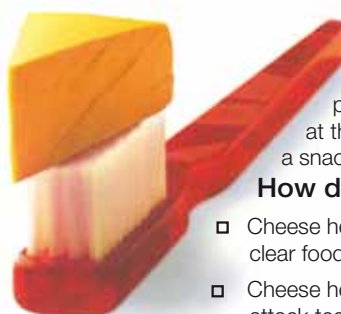
Do not put your infant or toddler to bed with a bottle of formula, milk, juice or other liquid. Sweet liquid bathes the teeth and gums and causes tooth decay. This even happens before growing teeth are visible through the gums. Sleeping with a bottle is also a choking risk for infants.



TODDLERS

Have children drink beverages with meals or snacks instead of sipping small mouthfuls throughout the day. If your child wants a sippy cup for a longer time, fill it with water.

CHEESE puts the bite on cavities!



Cheeses like aged cheddar, swiss and mozzarella can help prevent cavities when eaten alone, at the end of a meal or as part of a snack.

How does cheese protect teeth?

- Cheese helps to stimulate saliva flow and clear food particles from the teeth.
- Cheese helps neutralize the acids that attack teeth.
- Cheese reduces de-mineralization of teeth as well as promoting re-mineralization of tooth enamel.

Source: American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry