



## Everyday Sugar Consumption

When trying to prevent cavities, it is important to watch what you eat and especially what you drink. It is surprising how much sugar is in our drinks and food.

### Sugary drinks include:

- Fruit juices, fruit flavored punches, soft drinks, sports drinks, flavored waters, food pouches, and sweetened coffee all have high sugar content.

### Drink size matters

- Over the years we have gone from a 12-ounce regular drink size to a 20-ounce regular drink size.
  - ✓ Larger sizes mean more calories, more sugar, and more acid from a single can or cup of soda.
  - ✓ Diet or sugar-free drinks may not have sugar, but most contain harmful acids that pull calcium out of teeth and bones.
  - ✓ Sports and energy drinks have more harmful acids than soda.
  - ✓ Even fruit juice is not a healthy option for anyone who wants to avoid sugar.

### Types of food matters

- Sugar was thought to be the worst substance for the health of teeth, but current research has found starch, when combined with sugar and simple carbohydrates, is equally bad for your teeth.
  - ✓ Reducing or avoiding these types of foods is ideal for better oral health.
  - ✓ Examples include baked treats, packaged cookies, and sugar-sweetened carb rich breakfast cereals.

### Time to consume and frequency matters

- Taking an hour or more to consume a large sugary drink increases your chances for tooth decay.
- Frequent snacking over long periods also increases your chances for tooth decay.
  - ✓ The prolonged exposure of sugar and acid softens the enamel and eventually dissolves the outer layer which forms the cavity.
- Fluoridated bottled or tap water and milk are the best drinks for healthy teeth and body.

### Changes you can make to avoid sugars in your diet

- Reduce or avoid sugary foods and drinks.
- Rinse with water after eating high sugar food/drinks.
- Chew sugar free gum.
- Maintain good dental hygiene.
- Make water your main beverage.

### Resources

American Dental Association

<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/d/diet-and-dental-health>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/data-statistics/sugar-sweetened-beverages-intake.html>

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