

A Tip for the Sweet Tooth

Everyone knows that sweets are bad for your teeth. But, did you know that the amount of sweet food you eat is not as important as the length of time your teeth are exposed to sweets? Eat sweets at mealtime rather than between meals. The amount of saliva produced at that time will help protect your teeth.

If you cannot avoid sweets between meals, choose something with less sugar like nuts and seeds, peanut butter, popcorn, plain yogurt. Sticky sweets that stay in your mouth for longer periods of time like toffee or hard candies should be avoided as snacks.

Vitamins, Minerals and Your Teeth

Just like our bodies, our teeth and gums need certain essential vitamins and minerals to stay healthy and strong. Babies, children and adults all need ample amounts of the minerals calcium and phosphorous, and the vitamins A, C and D to ensure proper tooth development and strength.

Calcium, aided by phosphorous and vitamin D, is the main component of teeth and bones. It's what helps keep them strong. Vitamin A is necessary for the formation of tooth enamel, and vitamin C is essential for healthy gums.

Nursing mothers should keep in mind that their diet may influence the growth of the newly-forming teeth of their baby. A nursing mother's diet should include foods from all of the food groups.

An adequate intake of the proper vitamins and minerals helps in the development of healthy teeth. A lack or absence of these minerals can lead to disease.

Fluoride is an important mineral for tooth decay prevention. Fluoride strengthens the enamel of young developing teeth, and acts with calcium and phosphorous to restore and harden enamel in mature teeth. Fortunately for our teeth, fluoride has been added to almost half of the drinking water in Canada. If your drinking water comes from a well, you may want to have your water tested for the presence of natural fluoride. Contact your local health unit for more information.

As with the overall health of our body, a good diet is the best way to ensure dental nutrition. Strong teeth need a variety of whole grain breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables and lean meats, in addition to milk products. Toothhealthy snacks also include nuts and seeds, peanut butter, cheese, plain yogurt and popcorn.