



How Diet Affects Your Oral Health

Learn about how diet affects oral health for International Eat an Apple Day!

The Benefits of Eating Apples

What do all of these celebrations have in common: baby shower, graduation open house, bridal shower, and Super Bowl Sunday? Food, glorious food! From meatballs to sandwiches, fruit punch to cocktail drinks, cookies to cakes, and watermelon to apples, the list of delicious food can go on and on.

Though most of these foods are perfectly fine to eat in moderation, a balanced diet ensures we get the vitamins and nutrients we need to maintain our health. International Eat an Apple Day was established not only to pay homage to the more than 100 world-wide cultural celebrations in honor of the apple harvest, but to help promote a healthy diet.

Did you know that apples are nature's toothbrush? Apples can gently remove plaque from our teeth by simply eating them! The fruit also stimulates an alkaline saliva flow, which neutralizes the acidic environment produced by plaque after eating carbohydrate-rich foods.

Other oral health benefits of eating apples include:

- Increase of saliva production.
- Apples contain Vitamin C to help protect the gums from inflammation, infection, and bleeding.
- Apples contain Potassium to strengthen teeth and bone.

Apples are not only good for the teeth, they also help fight against heart disease and weight loss. It is important to eat apples in moderation as they are high in sugar and acidity.

The following tips are recommended when eating an apple:

- Eat the fruit with other foods to help neutralize the acidity.
- Rinse your teeth with water after eating an apple.
- Brush your teeth 30 minutes after eating an apple to avoid sugar molecules being abrasive against the tooth enamel.
- Eat your apple in one sitting. Slowly snacking at the apple allows the sugar and acid to sit on the teeth for a longer period of time, causing tooth decay.

It is no secret that daily brushing and flossing maintains healthy teeth and gums. However, your food choices can also play a role in your oral health.



Nature's Toothbrush

Munching on fibrous foods like apples, jicama, and pear in combination with water helps stimulate saliva production, washing away plaque and food particles. However, it does not replace brushing and flossing.

- Brush your teeth for at least two minutes, twice a day and floss daily.
- Continue to visit your dentist regularly to get your teeth professionally cleaned.
- Discuss any diet plans that may affect your oral health with your dentist.

Other Foods That Are Good and Not So Good for the Teeth

Cavity-causing bacteria in the mouth loves starchy and sugary foods, so it is important to select foods that can nourish the teeth, body, and mind. Eating a variety of nutrient-rich foods with a combination of good oral hygiene promotes a healthy mouth.

The following foods and drinks are considered healthy for the teeth and gums:

- Water, unsweetened-tea, and unsweetened-coffee
- Freshly squeezed/juiced fruits and vegetable drinks
- Nuts
- Carrots
- Yogurt, cheese, and milk (dairy)
- Fatty fish and meats
- Kiwis
- Whole grains
- Sweet potatoes
- Garlic and Onions

Avoid foods and drinks that offer little-to-no health benefits such as:

- Candy
- Chips
- Artificial fruit juices
- Ice cream
- Alcohol
- Commercial pizzas
- Commercial white bread
- Sweetened breakfast cereals
- Deep fried foods

More Dietary Tips to Keep Your Smile Healthy

- Avoid constantly snacking throughout the day. Constant snacking means a constant stream of food particles sticking to your teeth and more chemical reactions with the bacteria in your mouth, producing acids harmful to your teeth.
- Rinse your mouth with water after eating if you are unable to immediately brush. This will remove a good portion of food particles between your teeth.
- Wait at least 30 minutes to brush after eating acidic foods like fruits, coffee, and juices. The acid in the food can temporarily weaken tooth enamel, so it is best to wait a bit before brushing them.



For more oral health information, please visit our website at www.bcbsfedental.com.



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