

# What and How often you eat and drink can affect your teeth

By Gary S. Padgett



Drinking sports drinks and fruit juices can result in tooth erosion and cavities. This is due to the sugars, the fruit juices, and many other drinks. Sweet tea in Florida definitely falls into this category. Eating certain fruits regularly that are high in citric acid and sugars can also produce the same results.



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If you fall into the above categories, one way to minimize the damage is to rinse with water after you drink or eat the above items or at least drink or sip water after. This will dilute the citric acid and sugars that are on your teeth.

Eating and snacking during the day can also result in an accumulation of plaque (sticky whitish substance) which can result in a localized periodontal reaction which shows up as red and bleeding gums. The sugars in the plaque that sit on the teeth surfaces can also produce decay as mentioned above. It does not matter whether it is one cookie or a bag of them.

The solution is to again at the very least rinse with water. But since this plaque is from food debris rinsing is not really enough to remove it all. It is suggested that you brush with a tooth brush to remove the soft debris that sticks to the teeth. Toothpaste is not even needed. Water and a toothbrush is sufficient to remove the physical debris from the teeth and roots.

I suggest to all my patients to carry a toothbrush in their car along with a bottle of water. After eating or snacking, just take a sip of water and then use your brush to brush your teeth. You can do this anywhere. Then either spit out the water or swallow it and take another sip of water. Doing this once or twice after snacking will make a world of difference.

We also provide and recommend to our patients that they carry and use small inter proximal brushes to clean between the teeth. It is almost as good as flossing and easier to do during the day while driving or reading a book.

**To lower your risk of cavities and lengthen the lifespan of your dental crowns and fillings:**

- We recommend that you avoid sugary drinks when possible as well as sugary fruit juices and if having them, to rinse after with water.

- Limit your snacking between meals and if eating snacks to rinse and brush if possible shortly after.
- Try to have your sugary snacks and drinks with your meals. This is due to you having more salivary flow when eating and the saliva will naturally help keep your teeth healthier.
- If chewing gum or eating candy, choose the sugarless.
- Drink lot of water. It not only keeps your body hydrated but also keeps your teeth and gums healthier.

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