

## Strong Teeth, Healthy Body!

A healthy mouth helps keep the rest of your body health and strong. There are lots of things we can do to have strong, healthy teeth. One of the most important things is to eat and drink less sugar, and eat more fresh fruits and vegetables.

Whole foods like greens, veggies, fruits, legumes, and nuts and seeds all have **calcium**, which is important for strong teeth, plus the micronutrients like magnesium, zinc, and vitamins A and D to help your body absorb calcium.

Crisp fruits and raw vegetables, like apples, carrots and celery, help **clean plaque** from teeth and **freshen breath**. Many fruits and vegetable contain lots of antioxidant vitamins, such as vitamin C, that help **protect gums** and other tissues from cell damage and bacterial infection. Leafy salad greens contain lots of folic acid, a member of the B vitamin family, which promotes a healthy mouth and supports cell growth throughout the entire body.

For healthy teeth and gums this summer, look for a rainbow of different-colored fruits and veggies in your local grocery or farmers market.

## **Healthy Food and Drinks For Strong Teeth**

**Fresh Berries** - High in antioxidants, which strengthen the cells of your body in order to protect against gum disease and tooth decay.

**Mushrooms**- Excellent source of Vitamin D, which helps us absorb calcium and keep teeth strong. A Vitamin D deficiency can cause 30-80 percent of calcium to go right through you, so it's important to get some sun and enjoy foods that contain this sunshine vitamin.

**Almonds & Sesame Seeds:** Great sources of calcium! Try almond butter or tahini (seed butter made of sesame seeds).

**Walnuts:** Rich in Omega- 3 essential fatty acids

**Celery, carrots and apples:** These crunchy items act a bit like a gentle toothbrush, scraping food particles and bacteria away from your teeth. They're also a good source of vitamins A and C.

**Leafy Greens and Cruciferous Vegetables:** Lettuce and kale, spinach, asparagus, cabbage, broccoli, chard and other greens are packed with a variety of vitamins and minerals necessary to maintain and improve oral health.

**Make water your drink of choice!** Add a squeeze of fresh lemon or grapefruit to make it more interesting.

## **Food and Drinks to Avoid for Healthy Teeth**

Stay away from added sugars, candy, cookies, sugary snacks, and processed foods. These make it hard for teeth to stay strong and contribute to cavities, gum disease, overweight, and other health problems.

Avoid sodas, energy drinks, sports drinks and juice concentrate. They all contain high amounts of added sugar, preservatives and are known to cause tooth decay.

If you do buy juice, go for juices made of 100% fruit, and only have a little bit. Try serving juice watered down or make your own juice from scratch. Better to eat the whole fruit whenever possible, and choose water for your drink.

## **Be Label-Smart to Help Keep Your Teeth Healthy**

When looking at packaged foods, always read the ingredient list. It should be made up of minimal ingredients that are whole and that you can pronounce and understand.

“Sugar” goes by many names. When you see any of these terms below on a label, that means there is sugar added. Avoid added sugars to keep your teeth healthy and strong.

### Sugar alcohols

Mannitol

Zylitol

Sorbitol

### Artificial sweeteners

Aspartame

Saccharin

Sucralose

### Other names beside “sugar” used to sweeten your foods:

Sucrose

Glucose

Fructose

Dextrose

Corn syrup

Corn syrup solids

High fructose corn syrup

Fruit juice concentrate

Concentrated fruit juice sweetener

Turbinado sugar

Confectioner’s sugar

Brown sugar

Invert sugar

Malt syrup

Brown rice syrup

Polydextrose

Maltose

Maltodextrin

Date sugar

Xylitol

Mannitol

Malitol

Sorbitol

Erythritol

Sorghum syrup

Glucose solids

Beet sugar

Barley malt extract

Saccharin

Aspartame

Acesulfame Potassium

Sucralose

Neotame

No sweetener is good for your teeth, but if you do want to sweeten your food and drinks, aim for these better choices:

- Pure maple syrup
- Raw honey (must be 1 yrs of age to consume)
- Coconut sugar
- Whole Dates/ Figs
- Mashed bananas
- Apple sauce