

# Healthy Eating Habits for Healthy Teeth



They say an apple a day keeps the doctor away. Well, it may keep a drill-wielding dental provider away as well. The food we eat can have a big impact on our teeth. With the healthy food choices listed below, your teeth will thank you.

When you combine a tooth-friendly diet with good oral health habits, your regular provider visits could be only easy exams and painless cleanings.

So the next time you're trying to decide what to snack on or have for your next meal, think about what's best for your teeth and your body.

## Dairy Products

Milk, cheese, yogurt, and other dairy products are the primary dietary source of calcium, which is essential for strong bones and healthy teeth. Dairy products — especially cheese — also contain casein, a type of protein that helps repair tooth enamel. Calcium also helps protect your teeth against periodontal (gum) disease.

## Fruits & Vegetables

Fiber-rich fruits and veggies — like apples, berries, broccoli, and spinach — stimulate saliva flow, which is your best natural defense against cavities and gum disease. In addition, crunchy fruits and vegetables have a high water content, which dilutes the effects of the sugars and stimulates the flow of saliva. But steer clear of fruit juice!

## Foods to steer clear of:

- **Sticky candy:** The stickier the candy, the worse it can be for your teeth.
- **Starchy food:** Breads, crackers, muffins, etc. get stuck between your teeth and wreak havoc.
- **Dried fruit:** Again, just say no to sticky food that provides a nice little feast for bacteria.
- **Carbonated soft drinks:** Sodas are the leading source of added sugar for kids and teens. Most soft drinks also contain acids that erode tooth enamel.



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