



John G Plummer + Associates Dental Surgeons

Diet, acid and teeth

Why is diet so important for teeth?

Did you know your teeth are under attack every time you eat or drink anything that contains sugar? This attack lasts up to a whole hour.

Plaque (the sticky coating on your teeth) reacts with sugar and produces acid which harms our teeth and cause tooth decay.

Acidic food and drinks can be just as harmful. Acid in the diet will soften the tooth's hard enamel surface which can in turn make the teeth more susceptible to wear.

Over time the effects of acid wear on your teeth can include: dullness, yellowing, transparency, thinning, sensitivity and weakening of your teeth. These effects are irreversible.



Listed below are the 'pH' values of some common food and drinks. In short, the lower the pH the more acidic the product. Food or drink with a pH of less than 5.5 will have a harmful effect on your teeth.

Food/drink	pH
Wine	2.3-3.8
Sports drinks	2.3-4.4
Cola	2.5
Oranges	2.8-4.0
Strawberries	3.0-4.2
Vinegar	3.2
Apple juice	3.4
Orange juice	3.7
Tomatoes	3.7-4.7
Seedless raisins	4.0
Natural yogurt	4.2
Bananas	5.1
Cheese	5.9

Can I snack?

It's better for your teeth if you eat 3 times a day rather than graze. If you are going to consume sugar its best to do it at mealtimes.

Try to choose foods that do not contain sugar to snack on in-between meals. For example: cheese, breadsticks, ham, hummus, vegetable sticks and natural yogurts.

Go green

Colour coded nutritional information tells you at a glance if a food or drink has a high, medium or low amounts of sugar fats and salts. Red means high. Amber means medium. Green means low

Each serving (572g) contains

Energy	Fat	Saturates	Sugars	Salt
1476kJ 350kcal	12g	2.2g	11g	0.54g
18%	17%	11%	12%	9%

of an adult's reference intake
Typical values per 100g: Energy 258kJ / 61kcal

The more green on the label, the healthier the choice. Any red on the label means the food is high sugars, fats and salts and these are the foods we should try to cut down on or avoid.

Check the labels where possible and try and 'go green' where possible!

Swap your sugars!

Choosing healthier foods can be easier than you may think! By changing just a few eating habits you can make a big difference to your diet and your oral health.

Drinks

Swap sugary drinks such as fizzy pop, juice drinks, squashes, cordials and energy drinks to water, milk, diet, zero, sugar free or no added sugar drinks.

Breakfast

Swap sugary cereal to plain cereal such as plain porridge, plain shredded whole grain or toast.

Snacks

Swap sugary snacks such as sweets, biscuits, chocolate, cakes, for a snack with less sugar such as fresh fruit, nuts, cheese or breadsticks.

Puddings

Swap your sugary puddings for low-fat, lower in sugar yoghurts, fresh fruit salad or a sugar-free jelly.