



## Prevention is better than cure

By the age of six, more than half of all Australian children will be suffering from tooth decay. It's also the most common reason for Australian pre-schoolers to be admitted to hospital.

There are two main factors behind this rotten statistic:

1. Children are consuming more sugary foods and drinks more often during the day.
2. Children (and adults) aren't cleaning their teeth correctly.

Studies have shown that more than 99 per cent of children brush their teeth with toothpaste, but this is giving them a false belief that they are looking after their teeth.

In reality, the time they take to brush is too short and the technique they use is wrong.

The bigger problem, however, is what we eat and drink.

The challenge is to get children to change their eating habits. Each time we eat, the sugars in food and drink are broken down by the bacteria in our mouths to form acid, which starts attacking teeth.

Half an hour after eating is

### HOW TO BRUSH YOUR TEETH

- ☐ Brush for two to three minutes after breakfast and before bedtime.
- ☐ Use a pea-sized blob of fluoride toothpaste.
- ☐ Gently brush the inner surface of the teeth back and forth using short circular motions. Move to the outer

surface and then the chewing surface on top. Pay particular attention to where the tooth meets the gum.

- ☐ Use the tip of the brush to clean behind each front tooth - both top and bottom.
- ☐ Spit out toothpaste after brushing but don't rinse.

when teeth are at their weakest and most vulnerable.

If we don't eat anything else, the saliva goes to work to neutralise the acids and protect teeth. But, if we continue to snack throughout the day, particularly on sweet foods and fizzy drinks, we're constantly topping up the sugars that turn into acid.

Our teeth are under constant attack and saliva just can't cope with that level of acid and teeth will start to erode and decay.

The bottom line on eating habits is to eat fewer sugary foods and drinks and don't snack between meals.

Recent research shows

cheese is one of the healthiest snacks for your child's teeth.

In addition to providing large amounts of calcium, cheese also does its part to fight cavities.

Cheddar, Swiss and mozzarella all stimulate saliva glands to clear the mouth of debris. Saliva provides a strong protective film to the teeth and helps to wash away and neutralise the damaging acids.

Other good snacks are nuts and fruit (as long as you wash it down with some water straight after you've eaten).

When it comes to drinks, try and cut out all fizzy, sugary and sports drinks and drink tap water instead.

#### Foods that cause tooth decay

- ✗ Lollies
- ✗ Soft drinks
- ✗ Cordials
- ✗ Sports drinks
- ✗ Fruit juices
- ✗ Peanut butter
- ✗ Potato chips
- ✗ Savoury crackers
- ✗ Popcorn
- ✗ Fruit snack bars
- ✗ Muesli bars
- ✗ Sweet biscuits
- ✗ Some breakfast cereals
- ✗ Dried fruit

#### Tooth-friendly foods

- ✓ Milk
- ✓ Some cheeses
- ✓ Fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Nuts
- ✓ Wholegrain cereals
- ✓ Lean meats
- ✓ Tap water



## REASON TO SMILE...

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