

FitFUTURE

Strategies for
Better Living.

Healthy Habits to Support Good Dental Health



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Your mouth is your body's initial point of contact with the food you eat. What you put in your mouth not only impacts your general health but also that of your teeth and gums.

Tooth decay affects children in the United States more than any other chronic infectious disease. Untreated tooth decay causes pain and infections that may lead to problems; such as eating, speaking, playing, and learning.

The good news is that tooth decay and other oral diseases that can affect children are preventable.

What Parents and Caregivers Can Do

Teach children to make nutritious food choices and adopt healthy habits in caring for their teeth. Here are some tooth-friendly tips:

- Eat regular nutritious meals and healthy snacks such as cheese, yogurt, fruits and vegetables. Cheddar, Monterey Jack, Swiss and other aged cheeses trigger the flow of saliva which helps wash away food particles from teeth. Milk, cheese and yogurt are also good sources of Calcium and Vitamin D to build strong teeth and bones.
- Limit candy especially hard or sticky candies as well as soda and other

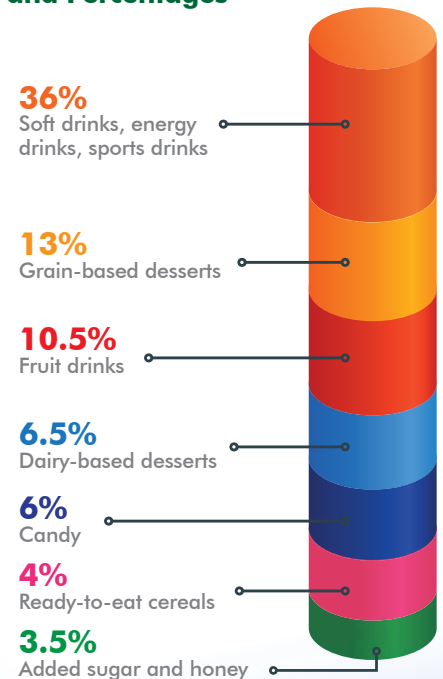


sweetened beverages. The bacteria in the mouth feeds off of these sugars, releasing acids, promoting tooth decay. If you do offer a dessert do it in close proximity to a meal as the increased saliva from the meal makes it easier to wash away food from the teeth.

- Water is the most tooth friendly beverage. Offer water instead of juice or soda.
- Protect your child's teeth with fluoride.
 - Use fluoride toothpaste. Have them brush at least twice per day.
 - If your drinking water is not fluoridated, talk to a dentist or physician about the best way to protect your child's teeth.
- Have your child visit the dentist regularly starting no later than his or her first birthday.
 - Read food labels and look for words that indicate sugar such as: brown, cane or confectioners' sugar, corn syrup, honey, high fructose corn syrup, syrup and molasses.



Top Sources of Sugar in the Diet and Percentages



SOURCE: *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*

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American Dental Association
<http://www.ada.org>

Center for Disease Control
<http://www.cdc.gov>

Web MD
<http://www.webmd.com>

