

# Food and drink for Healthy Teeth

For healthy teeth, food and drinks should be free of added sugar whenever possible.

Tooth decay (dental caries) is a diet related disease. Sugars in the food and drinks you consume mix with the bacteria in the plaque on your teeth and produce acids. These acids attack the outer layers of the tooth (tooth enamel).



Consuming sweet food and drink between meals is a major cause of tooth decay; this is because there is no between-meal period for teeth to undergo recovery. The more often sweet foods and drinks are consumed, the higher the risk of tooth decay.

*Foods to have every day*

Foods from these five food groups are best for you and your family.  
Low fat milk, cheese and yoghurt can be given to children 2 years of age and over.

				
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles and other grains	Vegetables and legumes	Fruit	Milk, yoghurt and cheese	Lean meat, fish, chicken, eggs and legumes

## What you can do to help maintain healthy teeth:

- Limit how often you have sweet foods and consume them during meal times rather than between meals.
- Limit sweet drinks, including fruit juices (even if diluted, fruit juice contains natural sugars which can lead to tooth decay).
- Choose healthy snacks such as fresh fruit, vegetable sticks, natural yoghurt, plain popcorn, soups or cheese.
- Choose fresh fruit over dried fruit, as dried fruit will leave a sticky residue on your teeth and can contribute to tooth decay.
- Drink fluoridated tap water and plain milk instead of soft drinks, juice or cordial.
- Have a piece of cheese after consuming sweet or acidic food as dairy products assist in reversing the decay process.



## Foods and Drinks that Damage Teeth:

- Juice
- Cordial
- Flavoured Milk (Milo, Quik, Big M)
- Ribena
- Sports Drinks
- Soft Drinks (including sugar free)
- Sweetened cereal (such as Nutri-grain and Coco Pops)
- Dried Fruit
- Muesli Bars
- Dried Fruit Bars (Rollups)
- Honey
- Jam
- Nutella
- Sweet Biscuits
- Cake
- Lollies



## Snacks that are Tooth Friendly:

- Dry biscuits (crackers)
- Sliced ham, salmon or turkey
- Popcorn
- Plain rice crackers
- Cut-up vegetables with dips
- Nuts
- Cheese slices
- Sushi
- Peanut Butter, Vegemite, Butter

Brushing your child's teeth and cleaning between your teeth is important because it removes plaque. If the plaque isn't removed, it builds up and can cause tooth decay and gum disease. You should brush your child's teeth at least twice a day.

### For more information:

- Contact Inspiro Community Health Service on (03) 9738 8801
- Visit [www.inspiro.org.au/happyteeth](http://www.inspiro.org.au/happyteeth)
- Visit the Dental Health Services Victoria website – [www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au)

