

Dietary Advice

Tooth decay happens when plaque come into contact with sugar in the mouth, causing acid to attack the teeth.

Foods that contain sugars of any kind can contribute to tooth decay. To control the amount of sugar you eat, read the nutrition facts and ingredient labels on foods and beverages and choose options that are lowest in sugar. Common sources of sugar in the diet include soft drinks, sweets, biscuits and pastries.

For good dental health, keep these tips in mind when choosing your meals and snacks:

- Drink plenty of water.
- Eat a variety of foods from each of the five major food groups, including:
 - whole grains
 - fruits
 - vegetables
 - lean sources of protein such as lean beef, skinless poultry and fish; dry beans, peas and other legumes
 - low-fat and fat-free dairy foods

Limit the number of snacks you eat. If you do snack, choose something that is healthy like fruit or vegetables or a piece of cheese. Foods that are eaten as part of a meal cause less harm to teeth than eating lots of snacks throughout the day, because more saliva is released during a meal. Saliva helps wash foods from the mouth and lessens the effects of acids, which can harm teeth and cause cavities.

To learn what foods are best for you, visit

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/heal/healthy-eating-guidelines/>