## Top 5 Healthy Foods for Healthy Teeth

## Dental Health Article



Most people know the key factors of success to keeping your smile healthy: daily preventative care (such as brushing and flossing) & regular dental visits. But did you know the foods you eat can also impact the health of your teeth and gums? *Everything* you eat can affect every cell in your body. Here are 5 foods to keep your teeth healthy & 5 foods to avoid.

## Top 5 Foods for a Healthy Smile

1 Dairy products such as cheese, milk & yogurt are rich in calcium & vitamin D, essential for maintaining strong, healthy teeth & bones. In particular, cheese & yogurt have added qualities that make them especially beneficial for a healthy mouth. Many cheeses (e.g. Cheddar, Gouda, Mozzarella), may help neutralize the harmful acids in the mouth responsible for tooth erosion. Sugar-free yogurt may help conquer bad breath, as the beneficial bacteria in yogurt has been known to combat odour-causing plaque bacteria in the mouth.

**2 Fruits & vegetables** are loaded with nutrients including vitamins, minerals & anti-oxidants. These play a big role in keeping gums & teeth healthy. Eating fibre-rich fruits & vegetables can also help massage the gums, improving their circulation and thus the health of your teeth. Leafy greens, celery, carrots, apples, broccoli, cabbage & cauliflower are particularly beneficial, so make sure you get your "5 to 10" servings every day!

**3 Fish & flax** are high in omega-3 fatty acids which have been linked with decreased risk of periodontal (gum) disease. The omega-3 fatty acids in fish may have anti-inflammatory properties that help decrease the redness & swelling associated with gingivitis (early stage of periodontal disease), lowering your risk of developing advanced stages of the disease.

**4 Water** is a particularly important nutrient when it comes to dental health. Not only is water the primary component in our saliva, it is a valuable rinsing agent that can clear food particles, sugars, food acids & bacteria from the mouth, decreasing your risk of cavities & decay.

**5 Green tea** contains beneficial compounds called "polyphenols" that may help combat the harmful cavity-causing bacteria in your mouth. Suppressing the number of harmful bacteria in the mouth can decrease the risk for cavities & bad breath.



## Top 5 Foods to Avoid 1 Sugary foods such as candies, sodas, sports drinks &

chocolate contain large amounts of refined sugars.
Oral bacteria thrive on simple sugars & convert
them into powerful acids that can erode teeth &
cause cavities & other forms of tooth decay.

2 Sticky foods such as dried fruits, caramels, toffees &
sugary gum should be avoided as they can become
easily stuck between & behind teeth. When left stuck
on teeth, bacteria are allowed ample time to convert
the sugars in these foods to acids, causing cavities.

**3 Acidic foods** such as citrus fruits, wine, beer, vinegar, black tea & carbonated sodas can erode the protective enamel layer on teeth, making teeth more susceptible to cavities & decay.

4 Food low in nutritional value such as fast food, junk food & many processed foods can cause potential problems for your dental health if you consume these too often. These "empty calorie" foods do not leave much room in your diet for the healthier, nutrient-rich foods needed to maintain a healthy mouth. 5 Alcoholic beverages are acidic & can erode & discolour teeth. Drinking too much alcohol can cause temporary dehydration, causing dry mouth. Dry mouth can allow harmful cavity-causing bacteria to remain in the mouth for extended periods of time, increasing your

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risk of tooth decay.