

Hidden Sugar and Your Oral Health

When you think about sugary foods, you likely think about candy, soda, and desserts. Surprisingly though, some of the foods that we believe to be healthy for us are actually full of hidden sugars: fruit juices, spaghetti sauce, flavored yogurts, breakfast cereals, ketchup – the list goes on and on. Not only do these “hidden” sugars impact your overall health and weight management, they can impact your dental health, even if you don’t notice the impact right away.

What can you do to help prevent the effects of sugar on your oral health?

- **Choose nutritious foods.** The next time you find yourself craving chips or cookies, reach for something nutritious instead. Fruit, veggies, unsweetened yogurt and cheese contain calcium and other nutrients that help strengthen teeth and protect them from decay.
- **Drink water, not soda.** Soft drinks and other sweet beverages coat the teeth with sugar, which promotes cavities. Water helps to neutralize acid and rinse away food particles.
- **Eat sweets in moderation.** If you do indulge in sweets, do so right after a meal, when your mouth is producing extra saliva that helps rinse away sugar.
- **Get creative.** Look for alternatives to sweetening and enhancing the taste of your food and drinks. Consider adding cut up fruit to water, add cinnamon to plain yogurt, and make your own salad dressings!

Oral wellness isn’t just about how you take care of your mouth; it’s also about what you put in it. Maintaining healthy eating habits and good oral care keeps you healthy in many other ways.

You can learn more about nutrition and the basics of oral health care by visiting United Concordia’s Dental Health Center at <https://www.unitedconcordia.com/dental-insurance/dental-health/care-prevention/>