



NUTRITION

AN IMPORTANT PART OF ORAL HEALTH



Dental caries and periodontal disease are the most common, chronic and infectious oral conditions in humans. These conditions can be prevented with proper diet and oral care.

Children and adults with poor diets are susceptible to dental caries and periodontal disease. Protein, vitamins, and minerals, especially calcium and phosphorus, are needed to build and maintain strong teeth and resist tooth decay and gum disease.

“Say cheese!” for good dental health

- Evidence shows that cheeses such as mozzarella, Swiss and aged Cheddar are cariostatic (inhibit the formation of dental caries). Enamel demineralization can be prevented by stimulating saliva production. Saliva increases plaque pH and promotes clearance of fermentable carbohydrate from the oral cavity, which is associated with dental caries. Eating cheese has been shown to stimulate salivary glands, potentially preventing enamel demineralization. (1)
- Nutritional components of cheese, including protein (whey and casein), lipids, calcium and phosphorus may be partly responsible for the beneficial effects of dairy foods on oral health by helping reduce enamel demineralization and enhance remineralization. (1)

Got milk or chocolate milk?

- Nutrients found in milk and chocolate milk, such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and vitamin D, support the development of teeth and oral tissue.
- Evidence shows that cow's milk is noncariogenic (neither promotes nor reduces dental caries). A decline in the consumption of cow's milk has paralleled an increase in consumption of soft drinks, displacing essential nutrients and contributing to overall poorer diets. Furthermore, acids present in carbonated beverages can have a greater negative effect on enamel than the acids produced by bacteria from the natural and/or added sugars found in many foods, including milk. (2)
- Brushing after meals and snacks further protects teeth from sugars found in many foods and drinks.



Did you know?

- Like oral hygiene habits, eating habits are formed at a young age.
- Each food group provides different nutrients. Foods from all groups-dairy, fruits, vegetables, grains, and protein are required for a healthful diet.
- Children require snacks to meet their calorie and nutrient needs and to ensure optimal growth and development.
- Adequate hydration is important for children; however, not all beverages are created equal. Milk offers many nutrients essential for building healthy teeth, including calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, vitamin D and protein. Soft drinks, sport drinks and juices have little or no nutritional value and contain tooth-decaying acid.

One Serving Equals:

1 cup of milk
1 cup of yogurt
1.5 to 2 ounces of cheese

Daily Dairy Requirements:

2 cups for children
2 to 3 years
2.5 cups for children
4 to 8 years
3 cups for children
9 years and older

Tips for “talking up” nutrition

- Offer dairy foods, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains with every meal.
- Be persistent when offering healthy foods to children. You may have to offer a food up to 20 times before a child is willing to eat it.
- Include 3 servings of dairy in your diet every day.
- Include 5 cups of fruits and vegetables and plenty of whole grains in your diet every day.
- Snack time is a nutrition opportunity-a chance to incorporate healthy foods into your child's diet.
- Healthy snack foods include yogurt, fruit, cheese, vegetables, whole grains, and milk.
- Avoid candy, cookies, and other common snack foods that contain little or no nutrition.
- Offer low-fat or fat-free milk at meals and snacks to meet daily dairy requirements.

Useful websites:

St. Louis District Dairy Council:
www.stldairycouncil.org

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry:
www.aapd.org

Missouri Dental Association:
www.modental.org

American Dental Association:
www.ada.org

MyPlate:
www.choosemyplate.gov

Illinois State Dental Society:
www.ISDS.org



1. Jarvis, J.K., McBean, L.D., & Miler, G.D., (2007). Handbook of Dairy Foods and Nutrition, 3, 245-264.

2. www.aapd.org. Diet and Dental Health.

3. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (2013). Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Oral Health and Nutrition, 693-701.