

NUTRITION MENTORING HANDOUT

Snacking and Healthy Teeth

Healthy baby teeth are important for eating, talking, smiling and holding the place for adult teeth – they aren't "just" baby teeth!

Plaque:

Plaque is a type of sticky bacteria that forms a film around teeth and gums. Plaque uses the sugars from foods and drinks to make acid, which causes cavities. The more often sugary and starchy foods are eaten, the more often acid attacks the tooth. Also, the texture of sugary, starchy foods readily sticks to teeth, which prolongs the acid attack on the teeth.

Some examples of sticky, starchy, sugary foods include:

- Fruit roll-ups / fruit snacks
- Chewy snack bars
- Candy
- Cookies
- Pastries

Sugary drinks such as pop, fruit juice, slush and iced tea can also contribute to cavities and should be limited. Sipping on sweetened drinks, such as pop from a bottle or a sippy cup, should be avoided as it prolongs an acid attack on the teeth.

Tips for Healthy Snacking

- Avoid/limit foods or drinks containing sugar. You can do this by reading nutrition labels and looking for ingredients that end in "ose". For example, sucrose, fructose and glucose.
- If you are going to indulge in a sugary treat, eat it with your meal. The increased saliva flow dilutes the sugars and helps to wash them away.
- Calcium helps to build strong healthy teeth. Good food sources of calcium include yogurt, cheese, milk, and fortified milk alternatives.



HEALTHY EATING TEAM

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