

## Diet and Oral Health

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### Abstract

We take a good care of our teeth and gum. We brush daily, floss regularly and clean the tongue to maintain a perfect oral hygiene. From using a right toothbrush to trusting only fluoride-rich toothpaste, we leave nothing to be desired in the quest to maintaining our dental health.

All this however sometimes proves insufficient and we fail to get the kind of dental health we yearn. Why so? Well, it has a lot to do with what we eat! Yes, foods have a huge role to play in the way our teeth and gums maintain their health.

**Keywords:** *Diet; Oral Health; Teeth; Gum*

### Introduction

Diet has a major role in our oral health. Balance in the diet apart from strengthening the hard and soft tissues in the oral cavity it also helps in maintaining the proper masticatory function.

We know acidic foods are harmful; we can't afford eating fruits rich in citric acids and we have to cut down the intake of coffee, tea etc. But the question is, what should we eat? We should eat only what dentists ask us to. We should eat what adds value to our dental health.

Researches have shown that Poor oral hygiene and change of diet lead to an increase in oral plaque and gingival inflammation. The inter-individual comparison indicated a shift in bacterial composition.

The important role of sociobehavioural and environmental factors in oral health and disease has been shown in a large number of socioepidemiological surveys. In addition to poor living conditions, the major risk factors relate to unhealthy lifestyles (i.e. poor diet, nutrition and oral hygiene and use of tobacco and alcohol), and limited availability and accessibility of oral health services. This article deals with the diet and nutritional aspects of Oral health.

### Here are food types to include in the diet for healthy teeth and gums

#### A diet rich in calcium and phosphorous

Eating too much of acidic foods or drinks causes a lot of damage to our teeth. This weakens the enamel and leads to tooth decay in a gradual manner. We should thus start a diet rich in minerals. Including foods rich in calcium and phosphorous gives the teeth its share of nutrients and keeps them stronger. So, eat more of cheese, milk, yogurt egg, fish etc.

#### A diet rich in firm and crunchy foods

Hard and crunchy foods with water help your teeth a lot. Such foods not only help in the production of saliva in the mouth but also

help cleaning the tooth in a natural manner. This is how harmful foods and bacteria are kept out of the way. So, start having a diet rich in foods such as carrots, apples, and celery.

### **A diet in vitamin D**

Lack of vitamin D can cause a lot of health problems. In fact, this vitamin is needed to keep your teeth healthy and stronger. So, start taking this vitamin and you know that the sunlight is the biggest source of that. Eat more of fish, egg, yolks as well.

### **A diet rich in vitamin C**

Vitamin C is as much important for your teeth and it's for gums. It's needed to cut down inflammation and strengthen blood vessels. This is how your gums stay away from diseases and you fight periodontal diseases with ease. So, start eating more of oranges, broccoli, and strawberries to keep the gums healthy.

### **A diet rich in antioxidants**

Antioxidants are one of most important food types to maintain dental health. They provide great protection against bacterial infection and cell damage to keep you away from inflammation and periodontal disease. So, eat more of beans, apples, grapes and nuts to get healthy teeth and gums.

### **A diet rich in probiotics**

Probiotics are needed in the body to keep the plaque in check and promote healthy gums. They are considered a form of good bacteria to bring dental health. Try eating fermented food, including yogurt to maintain your dental health.

### **Other food types**

Apart from these major food types, you will also need to include in the diet anthocyanins, arginine, and polyphenols in the diet. Some of the foods for these minerals include grapes, cherries, meat, soy, nuts. These all help a lot in giving you healthy teeth and gums.

Food can vary according to the health of the teeth and gums. Visit your dentist for a dental check-up. Based on the health, ask the dentist to prescribe the food items or diet type to follow. This is how dental health is maintained.

Also, you can get dietary supplements in the market which contain the required nutrients but this is only recommended if there is lack of availability of the natural sources. If you are a busy person and doesn't get enough time to take the essential nutrients then go for the organic nutrition supplements. Never opt inorganic nutrition supplements as it causes harm to different organs of our body including the kidneys and liver [1-7].

## **Conclusion**

As Doctors, we should focus more on the preventive aspect rather than the curative aspect, unlike the present scenario. Diet is an unavoidable topic in oral health. Dentists should take into consideration the diet of patients and give proper diet instructions for the betterment of the patients oral health. In case of busy dental practitioners, atleast they can refer the patients to a good dietician. Always remember Preventing diseases or health related problems makes us the real health providers of the society.

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