



THE BLOCKLEY PARTNERSHIP

Working together for your dental health

Safer Snacks

Tooth decay is caused by the interaction of sugar and dental plaque (the sticky film of bacteria on the surface of the teeth).

- Dental plaque forms continuously on the tooth surface.
- Each time sugar enters the mouth it is converted into acid by plaque bacteria.
- Acid attacks the teeth for 30 - 60 minutes after each meal or snack.
- Continual snacking on sugary foods and drinks greatly increases the frequency of acid attack and is much more likely to lead to tooth decay.

There are no hard and fast rules on how many times a day people can safely eat and drink sugars without damaging their teeth.

Sensible advice for most people is to limit their sugar intake to meal times only.

Be aware of products claiming to be:

- Low sugar
- No added sugar
- Reduced Sugar

These may still contain enough sugar to feed the plaque bacteria and in some cases can contain large quantities.

On food labels look out for ingredients such as:

- Sucrose
- Maltose
- Fructose
- Hydrolised starch
- Glucose
- Dextrose
- Concentrated fruit juice
- Honey

These are all sugars - it is easy to be misled by the manufacturers.

Fruit is the healthiest natural form of sugar that should be consumed as a part of everyone's daily diet. Fruit does however contain sugar and in an individual at risk of tooth decay should be confined to the time of your main meals through the day and ideally not snacked on in between meals or just before bedtime.

To help maintain a healthy mouth remember these simple rules:

- 1 Limit sugary foods and drinks to meal times only.
- 2 Brush your teeth with a fluoride toothpaste twice a day.
- 3 Visit your dentist regularly.

Some alternative safer snacks:

Carrots, peppers, celery, cucumber, tomatoes, courgettes. Water biscuits, bread sticks, cream crackers, rice cakes. Chapati, pitta bread, crumpets, potato cakes, matzos, rice cakes, savoury scones, cheese straws. Plain crisps, homemade plain popcorn, marmite soldiers.



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Hidden Sugar

The role of the diet is a key factor in the prevention of dental disease. By reducing sugar intake, especially in between meals, we can substantially reduce decay and other medical problems.

The problem is that sugar is hidden in many foods. Working together, with a commitment from you, good tooth brushing, a sensible diet and high quality dental care from our dental team, it should be possible for you to have a healthy, comfortable decay-free mouth forever.

Prevention

- 1 Sugar plus plaque causes tooth decay.
- 2 Frequent intake of even small amounts of sugar is harmful.
- 3 Sugar in a balanced diet, eaten at meal times is generally OK.
- 4 Sugar is not required for extra energy if you have a balanced diet.



Product	Portion	Teaspoons of sugar
Chocolate biscuits	2 biscuits	2.5
Digestive biscuits	2 biscuits	1.2
Custard cream biscuits	2 biscuits	1.6
Rich tea biscuits	2 biscuits	1.0
Swiss roll	2 slice	4.0
Tinned rice pudding	80g	4.0
Fruit yoghurt	1 small carton	3.0
Ice cream	1 scoop	1.2
Sugared cereals	3 tablespoons	4.0
Cornflakes	3 tablespoons	0.5
Muesli	1 tablespoons	1.0
Drinking chocolate	3 tablespoons	4.0
Energy drink	1 glass	4.5
Bottled lemonade	1 glass	2.0
Fruit squash (diluted)	1 glass	1.0
Cola drink	1 can	7.0
Most packet soups	1 packet	2.0-4.0
Baked beans	1 tin	5.0
Brown sauce	2 teaspoons	0.5
Tomato ketchup	2 teaspoons	0.5
Boiled sweets	1 pack	24
Milk or plain chocolate	1 small bar	6.5
Mints	1 tube	7.5
Toffees	1 4oz bag	20
Chewing gum	1 packet	8



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