

# Oral Health Tips

smile discoveries<sup>SM</sup>

## Dieting: Why some diets may damage oral health

**On your way to a trimmer waistline, don't short-change your teeth and gums. Whatever diet you choose, take extra care of your oral health by supplementing your diet with multivitamins and drinking extra fluoridated water. Talk with your dentist or physician about any possible health affects of the diet you have chosen.**

### Avoid Quick Fix Diets

Nutritious foods and beverages are needed for healthy teeth, gums and bone. Poor nutrition can affect the immune system and increase the risk of periodontal disease.

- Fad diets with lots of fruits that are full of natural sugars can promote decay and erode tooth enamel.
- Diet pills may increase the risk for cavities by reducing the saliva flow that helps neutralize the affects of plaque acids.
- Crash diets, fasting and anorexia can lead to deficiencies of nutrients and minerals, including calcium, needed for healthy teeth and bone.
- A dental health professional should be consulted if you are unsure how a diet may affect your oral health.

### Nutrition & Oral Health

The links between oral health and nutrition are many. The interactions are complex, with food and nutrition having the potential for both positive and negative effects on oral health. Good nutrition promotes good oral health through the healthy development and maintenance of the mouth's tissues and natural protective mechanisms. In contrast, certain foods, particularly starches or carbohydrates, can cause plaque development increasing the risk for oral disease.

- Eat a balanced diet to maintain good oral health throughout life.
- Choose foods from each of the five major food groups: breads, cereals and other grain products; fruits; vegetables; meat, poultry and fish; and milk, cheese and yogurt to keep teeth, gums and bone healthy.
- Limit in between meal carbohydrate snacks, like candies and soda containing sugar, and complex starch foods like chips, pasta, breads and bakery, that can promote tooth decay.

Source: American Dental Association: [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)

For more oral health information, please visit our Web site at [www.decaredental.com](http://www.decaredental.com)