

Western Dental Reveals the Truth About Juice

Parents with the best intentions will rarely give their children soda, but are regularly providing fruit juice, believing it's a healthier choice.

Which one is better for a child's teeth – soda or fruit juice? Neither one!

Research shows that juice, soda, diet soda, and even tea aren't "healthy" alternatives for sugary soft drinks. These drinks all expose the teeth – of both children and adults – to decaying acids that cause dental erosion, lead to cavities, and can create overall health problems.

This is a timely topic, because February is National Children's Dental Health month.

"Western Dental cautions all its patients, especially children, about the dangers of drinking sugary drinks," said Dr. John Luther, Chief Dental Officer at Western Dental. "Tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease. Tooth decay is caused by a bacterial infection and uses sugar to make acids. The more sugar you consume, the more acids are produced, and gradually this creates a cavity in the tooth."

Below are factors to consider from Dr. Luther that can impact the health of your teeth.

- **What causes dental erosion?** Sugar and acid are the primary culprits. The erosion takes place when the enamel (the teeth's hard, protective coating) is eaten away by acid and sugary substances. Both helpful and harmful bacteria live on the teeth, gums, and tongue.
- **Sugar's impact:** Tooth decay is caused by a bacterial infection and uses sugar to make acids. The more sugar you consume, the more acids are produced, and gradually this creates a cavity in the tooth.
- **Acid's impact:** When something acidic is consumed, the enamel is temporarily softened. Frequent exposure to acid eats away at the protective layer on your teeth and can lead to tooth decay.
- **Tips to avoid tooth erosion:**
 - Drink acidic beverages all at once, instead of sipping it all day.
 - Use a straw to avoid the teeth from being immersed in liquid.
 - Substitute acidic beverages with water.
 - Milk used in night time bottle feeding sits on the teeth all night and creates acids.
 - Instead of brushing, rinse mouth with water after drinking acidic beverages.
- **Drinks to avoid:** Soda, diet soda, energy drinks, orange juice, apple juice, tea, citric juices.
- **Recommended food & drinks:** Cheese, leafy greens, plain yogurt and almonds are considered "healthy" foods. Water, milk and unsweetened tea are the best choices for children and adults to maintain good oral health and overall health.

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