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MANAGING WELLNESS

HOW TO PREVENT CAVITIES — 7 SURPRISING TIPS



Posted by [JENNY GREEN](#) April 6, 2018

Did you know that there's more you can do to keep your smile looking good than brushing, flossing, rinsing and regular dental visits? Preventing tooth decay is something you can do round the clock. Check out these tips on how to keep you and your family's teeth cavity free. Some may surprise you!

Sugar-Free Gum

Sugary gum is a big no-no when it comes to oral hygiene, but [sugar-free gum](#) can actually help prevent cavities. Chewing encourages your mouth to produce saliva—one of nature’s best cavity fighters. With saliva coating your teeth and gums, bacteria and plaque don’t cling well. Gums made with artificial sweeteners like [xylitol](#) also can help neutralize harmful acids in the mouth.

Tap Water

Fluoride [strengthens tooth enamel](#) and helps it resist decay, and in many areas of the U.S., it’s conveniently available in tap water. Bottled water may not contain [fluoride](#), so sip tap water regularly to wash away food debris and bacteria and keep your mouth moist. Tap water is a healthy alternative to sodas and sweet coffee or tea.

Hard Cheese

Dairy products with no added sugar are good for your teeth because they contain [calcium](#), but hard cheese stands out from the crowd. A protein in hard cheese called [casein protects against the loss of minerals](#) from tooth enamel and helps prevent cavities. Eat a small piece of cheese after a meal to neutralize food acids and promote saliva flow.

Licorice Root

Stay away from licorice candy, which is bad for your teeth, and chew natural licorice root instead. Licorice root contains licorisoflavan A and licoricidin, which are [antibacterial chemicals](#), natural substances that kill the bacteria that cause gum disease and tooth decay. Ask at your local natural or whole-food store for genuine licorice root, but always talk to your dentist or physician first about which natural supplements are right for you.

Fiber-Rich Foods

You probably already know that fruit and vegetables contain vitamins and minerals that keep you healthy, but did you know their [fiber cleans away harmful substances](#) left behind by other food particles that cling to your teeth? Cranberries are especially good at fighting cavities.

Dental Sealants

Dentists often recommend dental sealants for children, but adults can have them too. Sealants are [thin coatings of plastic](#) that protect the nooks and crannies of your molars, where bacteria and plaque can escape the attention of your toothbrush.

Brushing and flossing are the go-to habits for maintaining oral hygiene, but you don’t have to stop there. Follow some of these tips for extra peace of mind about preventing tooth decay, and feel confident that your teeth and gums are healthy, clean and cavity-free.

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