Help prevent tooth decay by limiting how often you have sugary food and drinks

Sugar content in food and drinks:

- Tap water = 0 teaspoons
- 1 can soft drink (375mls) = 10 teaspoons
- 1 bottle sports drink (375mls) = 7 teaspoons
- Iced coffee (350mls) = 12 teaspoons
- Fruit juice (250mls) = 5 teaspoons
- 1 glass cordial (250mls) = 6 teaspoons
- 1 lollipop (16gms) = 4 teaspoons
- Hazelnut spread 2 tablespoons (37gms) = 4 teaspoons
- 1 chocolate bar (50gms) = 7 teaspoons
- 1 muesli bar (50gms) = 5 teaspoons
- Sugar added cereals (100gms) = 5 teaspoons
- Tomato sauce (1 tbspn) = 1 teaspoon

*1 tsp is equal to 5 grams of sugar

For more information
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Tooth decay is Australia’s most common health problem. It happens when germs (bacteria) in your mouth convert sugars into acid. Over time acid weakens the tooth surface, causing decay. The good news is that tooth decay can be avoided.

**How often you have sugary food and drinks is important!**

- Every time you have something sweet to eat or drink, acid is produced in the mouth.
- It takes about 20 to 30 minutes for saliva to neutralise the acid.
- If you snack often, the time acid is in contact with your teeth increases – and so does the risk of tooth decay.

**Drinks**

- Plain tap water is best for teeth.

**Sugar**

On food or drink labels, sugar may be listed as:

- White sugar, brown sugar, raw sugar, icing sugar, corn syrup, castor sugar, treacle, golden syrup, chocolate, honey, glucose, molasses, sucrose, fructose, lactose and maltose.

- Fruit and fruit juice contain natural sugar which can damage the tooth surface if you have them often.
- Food may have no ‘added’ sugar but may still be high in natural sugar, so check the label.
- Sticky foods, like dried fruit and muesli bars, can stick to your teeth and make the acid attack last longer.

**To avoid tooth decay**

- Drink plain tap water.
- Breast milk is best for babies. If your baby is bottle fed, don’t put them to bed with a bottle as this greatly increases the risk of tooth decay.
- Limit the number of times a day you have sugary food and drinks.
- Replace high sugar foods with healthier choices, such as fresh fruits, raw vegetables, nuts, crackers and reduced fat dairy foods (reduced fat milks are not suitable for children under the age of 2 years).
- Clean your teeth and gums morning and night with a small, soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste.
- Children should use a low-fluoride toothpaste from 18 months to 5 years.
- Children will need an adult to help them brush every day until they are 8 years.
- Chew sugar free gum to increase saliva, as this helps to dilute acid in the mouth.