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The Connection Between Nutrition and Oral Health

Nutrition can impact your oral health in several ways. The most common include your diet, how often you eat, your salivary levels, and your hydration.

Your diet can have a significant impact on your overall health, and your oral health is no different. Certain foods, like starches (ex: potatoes, pasta, bread), simple sugars (ex: syrup, energy drinks such as Gatorade), and acidic foods (ex: eggs and pineapples) can deteriorate the enamel of your teeth, making you more susceptible to cavities (decay of the teeth) and bacterial growth in the mouth. Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet with adequate protein, fibrous vegetables (ex: broccoli, pinto beans), fruits, and complex carbs (ex: sweet potatoes, brown rice).

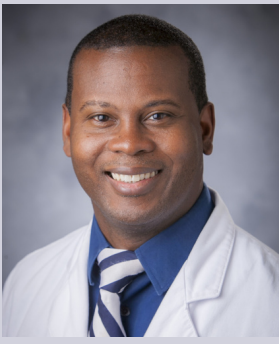
Space out your meals instead of constantly snacking throughout the day. The more often your teeth and gums come into contact with food (especially sugary food), the higher the chance that food will get stuck between your teeth, feeding the bacteria that promote tooth decay. Avoid sipping on sodas, sports drinks, and carbonated beverages throughout the day! These products are very acidic (high pH levels), which can cause the breakdown of enamel, promoting tooth decay.

As you chew, the enzymes in your saliva assist in the digestion process, while also containing proteins and ions with antimicrobial properties. If you don't produce enough saliva, you run a higher risk of tooth decay and oral infections. Aging, lack of sleep, and certain medications can cause a decrease in saliva production (dry mouth). Hydrating well and chewing sugarless gum that contains xylitol helps to stimulate saliva flow. Hydration affects almost every process in the body and is essential for health and well-being, including keeping the mouth clear of foods that promote tooth decay.



Ways to Decrease Risk of Disease

- Brush (with fluoridated toothpaste) at least twice a day, morning and night, or after meals when possible.
- Floss twice per day, especially before going to bed.
- Rinse your mouth after meals or chew sugarless gum to stimulate saliva flow.
- See your oral health care provider for exams, routine cleanings or oral cancer screenings twice yearly.
- Consult with your dentist if you notice pain, sensitivity, gum inflammation and/or swelling.



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Colorectal Cancer Awareness



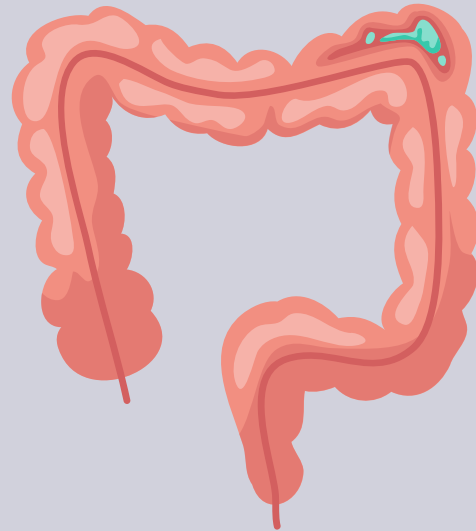
Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. In 2023, approximately 153,020 people were diagnosed with CRC, and 52,550 of those individuals passed away due to the disease. Out of the individuals diagnosed with CRC, 19,550 cases were younger than 50 years old, leading to 3,750 deaths in this age group. The number of cases in people younger than 55 is rising, and it's more common in men and people of color.

Who is at risk for colon cancer?

- People over 50
- Those who are overweight.
- Smokers
- Individuals with a family history of disease.

Symptoms of disease

- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain
- Blood in stool
- Anemia (low blood count)
- No visible symptoms



The best way to prevent colon cancer is through regular screening, which can be done via colonoscopy and/or an at home colon screening kit. It's essential to discuss screening with a doctor, starting at age 45 for most people. Those with a family history might need to start earlier.

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This Health Tip is a message from the Community Health Coalition, Inc featuring
Dr. Julius Wilder, and Dr. Desiree T. Palmer