

PATIENT'S PAGE



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SODA POP AND YOUR TEETH – what you should know...

Soda intake for today's kids is definitely on the rise! Soda consumption has almost tripled, from 22 gallons of cola per person a year in 1970, to 61 gallons per person a year in 2006. Kids are drinking sodas as a thirst-quencher and a caffeine kick. But sodas are also ruining their teeth! Kids are drinking the stuff from morning to night -- all through the school day. The result is a prevalence of cavities that dentists have not seen since pre-fluoride days. And, not only are sodas causing tooth decay, they are also putting kids at risk for obesity, diabetes and hyperactivity. And because soda is readily available through school vending machines, kids are getting sodas before school, between classes, during lunchtime -- anytime. The larger 16-ounce bottles are the biggest problem because this larger quantity allows kids to sip all day, literally dousing their teeth with pop -- bathing their teeth with sugar -- all day long. And the carbonation in soda also gradually breaks down the tooth's enamel.

TIPS FOR PARENTS - TELL YOUR CHILD TO:

- Select pop cans over re-sealable bottles. This limits the consumption of the pop to one sitting rather than sipping bottles and re-sealing them over a longer period of time.
- Limit regular pop to one can per day.
- Consume sodas only during meals to limit the teeth's exposure to sugar and acid.
- After finishing a soft drink, head to the water fountain. Either swallow the water or swish and spit it out. It takes the sugar off the teeth.
- Don't brush your teeth after drinking pop. The acid in the sugar weakens the enamel and, when you subject the enamel to a nylon bristle brush with toothpaste, you run the risk of wearing away the enamel even faster.
- Drink sodas through a straw. This results in less direct contact with the teeth.
- Eat two or more servings of dairy foods per day.

DIET SODA DRINKERS BEWARE!

Any type of soft drink (even diet soda) hurts teeth due to the citric acid and/or phosphoric acid in the beverages. Acid in soft drinks, whether they contain sugar or not, is the primary cause of weakened tooth enamel. The acid literally attacks your teeth, and each "attack" lasts approximately 20 minutes! And the acid attack starts over again with every sip!

Many other popular soda alternatives -- such as energy drinks -- can be just as bad for kids' dental and overall health. They don't have as much sugar, but some kids drink so much, they have the same effect as soda pop.

Because saliva helps neutralize acids and wash your teeth clean, the worst time to drink soda pop, ironically, is when you are very thirsty or dehydrated due to low levels of saliva.

The erosive potential of colas is 10X that of fruit juices in just the first three minutes of drinking!