



SODA and TEETH A Rotten Mixture

Soft drinks cause the MOST tooth decay! 1 out of 4 drinks we consume in America today is a soda. **Milk is out**, soda is in! We have graduated from a 6 oz soda to a 32 supersized soda over the last 50 years. 20% of school kids guzzle down at least 4 sodas per day, and up to 85% swig down at least 1.

Imagine putting **11 sugar cubes** in water, adding food coloring, some artificial flavoring, phosphoric acid for a zing and presto, we have a soda! The bugs (bacteria) on our teeth pig out on the sugar, and they produce acids which then eat our teeth. There may also be carbonic acid, malic acid, citric acid, tartaric acid, **AND it has an acidic pH.** Even the hardest substance in the body- **enamel, can't stand up to this very long!** Even **diet sodas** have all this acid and low PH.



Our **teeth need a break**, our stomach needs a break AND we need a break from food AND acid for at least 4-5 hours! This gives our **saliva a chance** to re-mineralize our teeth by bathing them in calcium ions, phosphorous ions, proteins, enzymes and bicarbonates to neutralize these acids and **rebuild your teeth.** Another growing decay problem as we get older is with **reduced saliva production.** This usually is due to medications such as for high blood pressure and many others. Less saliva, more decay!

One of the **worst** habits while drinking soda is **nursing a soda for hours, or holding soda in the mouth** and allowing it to bathe the teeth, or swishing the soda around and around for several minutes before swallowing. The carbonation and effervescence of the soda produce a pleasurable sensation, but this will quickly diminish after discovering what it will do to the teeth.

If you **have tooth wear, soda is likely contributing to it!** When the enamel is exposed to soda, it is softened by the acids and then worn away or abraded. Soda pop erosion may look like craters in the biting surfaces, grooves in the outside of teeth, or worn edges on the front teeth. This is especially harmful for those that are wearing braces, since there are many more places the bacteria can grow. Meticulous oral hygiene is essential to prevent your smile from permanent damage.

What can we do about it? Drink water when you are thirsty between meals, NOT soda. We all love our soda, so drink water or ice tea to quench your thirst and "reward" yourself with a little soda **AT MEAL TIMES ONLY.** **Parents - don't buy sodas** and if you do, don't make them readily available. **Schools - don't sell them** on campus, PERIOD! This is not an acceptable form of fund raising!

Phosphoric acid in colas also add unneeded phosphate ions into the body which are excreted by the body at the expense of your body's calcium stores-not a healthy side effect of cola drinking!

Learn how to brush your teeth well. Most people leave plaque (bacteria) at the gum line, especially on the very back teeth and on the inside. It is your responsibility to **KNOW** how to brush **ALL** of the plaque off **ALL** your teeth daily. Ask us, we will patiently show you until you get it. And, off course, **see your dentist every 6-12 months**, allow fluoride treatments with the hygienist, and, if you already have tooth damage, use a high concentration of home **fluoride gel treatment.** You can do it!