

Beneficial Foods for Teeth

By Sanda Moldovan, D.D.S.

MOST OF US ARE FAMILIAR with the dental tips for keeping our gums healthy—brushing, flossing, and avoiding certain foods (think sticky, sugary treats). However, it is now known that certain foods are actually good for your teeth and gums. Using these foods means that simply eating lunch could be a part of your daily dental routine, and snacking doesn't have to be an adverse factor.

Foods rich in calcium help ensure not only strong bones, but also healthy teeth. Other beneficial snacks include those containing polyphenols and probiotics, which can help encourage a healthy and pathogen-free environment in your mouth. Let's take a look at some of the tooth-friendly foods. When you don't have time to brush during the day, these fiber-rich foods act like brush bristles and help keep teeth clean.

Apples. An apple a day keeps the cavities away. Sticky carbohydrates, such as bread and cookies, tend to stick to our teeth, especially where the gum meets the tooth, causing dental decay. Eating an apple after meals helps remove these damaging food bits from the teeth. The mild acids in the fruit also help remove stains. Vitamin C, found in apples, also helps in collagen regeneration, keeping your gums resilient.

Celery sticks. Accompany dip with celery sticks instead of chips. The natural fibers help keep teeth clean, whereas chips can stick to the tooth surface and may lead to cavities. Celery is a very good source of vitamin C, which helps fight inflammation in your gums.

Carrots. If you are hungry mid-day, skip the cookies and have some carrots. The natural sugars in the carrots will give you a nice boost in energy, and you don't have to worry about having to brush your teeth after you eat them, as the fibers in the them

will do the work. The vitamin A found in carrots is also great for helping keep your gums and skin cancer-free and healthy.

Radishes. Biting into one of these has a scrubbing action on your teeth and gums. Radishes are also rich in sulphur and silicon, which makes them a great food for regeneration of connective tissue, found in our bones, skin, and gums. Sulphur also helps relieve pain and inflammation and promotes good bacterial flora.

Kale or kale salad. This has become one of my favorites because it is not only a fiber-rich food, but offers a good amount of calcium. Kale is also rich in flavonoids, which gives it antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, and helps fight gum disease.

To get the benefits of foods that are good for your teeth, make some simple substitutions. Instead of drinking soft drinks that erode tooth enamel, switch over to green tea or mineral water with a slice of orange or lemon. Substitute an apple or a stick of xylitol gum for a sweet pastry or candy bar. These are simple substitutions that can give you healthier teeth and gums. Δ

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