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Healthy Bytes

Give yourself something to
smile about

Tooth decay is not a pretty picture. It occurs when foods containing sugars and starches are left on your teeth. Bacteria then digest these foods, turning them into acids. Plaque forms and the acids in plaque dissolve tooth enamel, creating cavities.

The good news is it's easy to increase your chances of having healthy teeth.

To prevent tooth decay:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day with toothpaste containing fluoride. It's especially important to brush your teeth before going to bed.
- Clean between your teeth daily with dental floss.
- Eat nutritious and balanced meals. Limit carbohydrates, such as candy and chips, which can remain on the tooth surface.
- Check with your dentist about the use of supplemental fluoride or dental sealants, which can help protect your teeth.
- Drink fluoridated water. (Check on the status of your local water supply.)

- Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral examination.

Your teeth not only shape your appearance, but also help keep you healthy. That's something to smile about!

Source: "Dental Health: Tooth Decay Prevention." *WebMD*. Reviewed by doctors at The Cleveland Clinic Department of Dentistry. Edited by Charlotte Grayson, MD. May 2005. <<http://www.webmd.com/content/article/66/79618.htm>>.



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