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### Smart Snacks

Whole grain bread  
Whole grain unsweetened cereal  
Rice, Rice cakes  
Plain yogurt  
Fresh fruits

Popcorn  
Cheese, String cheese  
Nuts and seeds  
Meats, Meat jerky  
Sugarless chewing gum

Eggs  
Fresh vegetables  
Good beverages: Water, Plain  
Milk, Unsweetened Tea

### Foods to Avoid Between Meals

Dried Fruits, Raisins  
Cookies  
Chewy Granola Bars  
Pre-sweetened cereals

Fruit Roll-ups or Leathers  
Chewy Fruit Snacks  
Sweet Bread, pastries  
Sticky Candy like Taffy

Fruits in canned syrup  
Chips of any kind  
Crackers  
Gummy candies

Beverages such as Apple juice, Soda, Kool-Aid, Gatorade/sports drinks, energy drinks

Try to avoid sticky, sugary snacks and stay as close to natural foods as possible. Foods that are sticky tend to stick to the teeth and consequently stay in the mouth longer. The bacteria that cause tooth decay thrive on all carbohydrates, especially refined sugars and starches. The more exposure the bacteria have to a food source, the more active the bacteria. Try to have regular meals and limit the snack times.

### Common Causes of Tooth Decay

Tooth decay is caused by a combination of factors, some of the risk factors are listed below.

#### Frequent Snacking

Children who graze or snack throughout the day have more acid exposures, which causes breakdown of the enamel, even if they are snacking on healthy foods. Try to have regular meals and limit the snack time to only one or two between meals. This is the most common reason a child gets a cavity.

#### Improper tooth brushing and flossing

Teeth coated in plaque will cause the enamel to soften increasing the chance for decay. It is important to remove the plaque with proper and regular oral hygiene. Our recommendation is to brush after breakfast, and brush and floss before bed.

#### Snacking on Sugary Foods

If a snack is sticky it will stay in their mouth for hours. Foods that dissolve easily will be less cavity promoting. Avoid refined sugars and starches and stay as close to natural foods as possible.

#### Juices, sodas, and sports drinks

They contain lots of sugar and are highly acidic.

#### Fluoride exposure

Daily fluoride is beneficial to the teeth by making the enamel less soluble and in turn less susceptible to tooth decay. Exposure to daily fluoride can be obtained by drinking fluoridated water and using toothpastes, gels, or rinses.

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