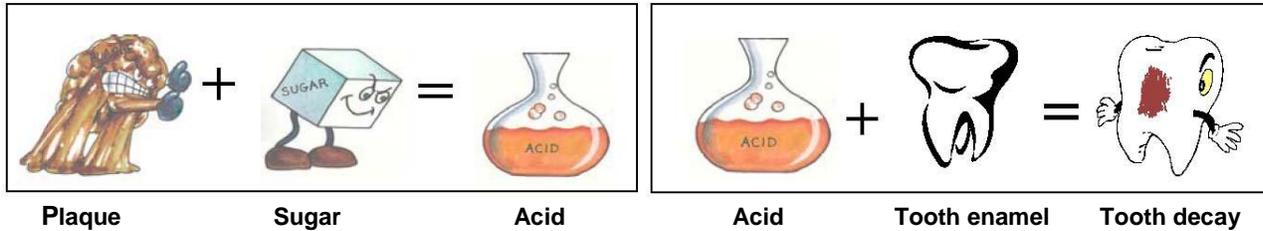


# Snacking and Dental Health

Sugar and plaque are the main causes of dental cavities. Plaque is a sticky film that forms on your teeth every day. It contains germs (or bacteria) that stick to your teeth. When sugar found in food and drinks combines with plaque, it produces an acid that damages the tooth's hard outer layer (enamel). When the damage is severe and a hole is made in the enamel, a cavity is created.



## Some Factors to Consider When Snacking

- Choose snacks that are nutritious and unsweetened. Healthy food is good for both your dental and general health.
- Read the ingredients list when choosing snacks. Note that raw cane sugar, honey, molasses, corn or maple syrup, glucose and fructose are all types of sugar.
- Limit sweets to special occasions and only serve them at mealtime. The increased flow of saliva during a meal helps wash away and dilute sugars.
- Reduce the length of time that sweet food stays in contact with your teeth. Avoid sipping sweet drinks for a long period of time, sucking on a candy or chewing sugared gum.
- Avoid sticky foods, such as cereal bars and dried fruits, because they stay on the surface of the teeth longer.
- Rinse your mouth with water, eat a piece of cheese or chew sugar free gum when brushing is not possible.

## Some Healthy Snack Ideas

- |                           |                                  |  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Cheese                  | ✓ Sodium reduced vegetable juice | ✓ Pita bread with hummus                         |
| ✓ Cottage cheese          | ✓ Bread sticks                   | ✓ Half sandwich (cheese, egg, ham, salmon, tuna) |
| ✓ Yogurt                  | ✓ Melba toast                    | ✓ Nut and seeds (for older children)             |
| ✓ White milk              | ✓ Rice cakes                     |  |
| ✓ Fresh fruits            | ✓ Half bagel                     |  |
| ✓ Vegetables with dip     | ✓ Hard boiled egg                |  |
| ✓ Unsweetened fruit sauce | ✓ Homemade muffin                |  |

**Remember to brush and floss twice a day!**

**Need more information?  
Talk to your dentist or dental hygienist  
or call the Ottawa Public Health Information Line at 613-580-6744**