

# 4 Daily Habits for a Lifetime of Healthy Teeth

**How to permanently stop cavities. Even if you've tried everything!**

In the past 50 years, we've learned how to keep our teeth healthy for an entire lifetime. The latest textbooks on cavities and gum disease are over 2000 pages long. Because of what we know about these dental diseases, *no child should ever need dentures.*

In spite of all our knowledge, dental caries is still the most common chronic infectious disease in children (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Together, let's bridge the gap between our understanding of how to prevent dental disease and our actual dental health habits. In support of National Children's Dental Health Month, let's adopt the following daily habits for a lifetime of healthy teeth!

## 1. Water not soda

Drink water instead of soda and sports drinks. Sodas are acidic because they contain citric acid and phosphoric acid. These acids are strong enough to dissolve teeth. Each sip forms small holes on the surfaces of teeth. "Soda sippers" quickly turn these small holes into larger holes, called cavities.

## 2. Meals not snacks

Eat meals instead of snacks to reduce the number of times that acid attacks your teeth. Foods you eat are turned into acid by the bacteria in your mouth. Sugar, potato chips, bread and cereals are carbohydrates that bacteria ferment into lactic acid. Bacteria make enough acid to start dissolving teeth in less than 5 minutes after your first bite of food.

## 3. Brush after eating

Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste after eating to remove plaque and protect your teeth. Plaque is the nearly-invisible sticky film of bacteria that coats your teeth. Removing dangerous plaque is important because the bacteria in plaque cause cavities. Brushing should take 2 minutes - so use a timer! Ask your dentist how to best brush crooked and crowded teeth.

## 4. Floss nightly

Floss between your teeth nightly to prevent cavities where toothbrushes can't reach. Brushing will not remove food and plaque that get stuck between teeth.

### Keep track of your healthy habits!

Track how well you are doing by coloring in the boxes below. Color in the boxes on the days that you drink water instead of soda, eat meals instead of snacks, brush your teeth after eating, and floss to clean between your teeth. Make sure you keep this paper somewhere you'll see it everyday.

For extra copies, visit [www.viechnicki.com/healthy-teeth](http://www.viechnicki.com/healthy-teeth)

Get started by writing your name in the box right.

Name:
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