

Post Operative Information: Nutritional Counselling

The most important factors in overall oral health and prevention are:

1. **Frequency** of snacking: limit snacking to once between breakfast and lunch and once between lunch and dinner
2. **Duration** of each snack:
 - short (5-15 minutes)
 - NOT one bite/sip every 15-30 minutes over two hours
3. **Quality of food:**
 - Some foods are more likely to promote cavities than others
 - Cariogenic foods (food that promote cavities) should be limited or followed by brushing. It's best to eat cariogenic foods during meals, rather than snacks
 - Try to avoid sticky foods, such as: raisins, processed fruit snacks, cookies and crackers, and candy that can adhere to teeth for long periods of time and are particularly problematic due to particles which become lodged between teeth for hours

Cariogenic Foods

- Sweet and sticky foods
- Soft drinks containing sugar and that are acidic
- Coffee or tea with added sugar and/or any kind of creamer or milk

Non Cariogenic Foods

- Nuts such as almonds and walnuts
- Vegetables such as carrots, celery
- Sugar-free Jell-O
- Fat-free yogurt
- Coffee or tea with no milk (sweeteners such as saccharine, cyclamate and aspartame do not cause cavities)



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4. **Neutralization** of the negative effects of snacking with Xylitol gum or mint is essential. The recommended dose is two pieces of xylitol containing gum or mints after consuming fermentable carbohydrates.

More details:

Cariogenic foods (food that promote cavities) are foods that contain carbohydrates fermentable by salivary amylase in decreased salivary pH, creating acids which melt the teeth resulting in cavities. These carbohydrates can be found in healthy food groups, such as grains, fruits, dairy, as well as products with added sugars. Several factors affect the cariogenicity of foods such as the frequency of fermentable-carb consumption; food form (solid vs. liquid); sequence of eating; combinations of foods and nutrient composition.

Cariostatic foods do not contribute to decay. These include proteins, most vegetables, fats and sugarless gum. Non-carbohydrate sweeteners (saccharin, cyclamate and aspartame) are cariostatic.

Anticariogenic foods (food that prevent cavities) are food that prevent plaque from recognizing an acidogenic food when consumed first. Xylitol cannot be metabolized by bacteria and is thought to have two mechanisms of action that protect the enamel, first an antimicrobial activity against *Streptococcus mutans*, and second a salivary stimulation from chewing xylitol-containing gum can increase the clearance of fermentable carbs from the tooth surface. The recommended dose is two pieces of xylitol-containing gum after consuming fermentable carbohydrates. There is some evidence that xylitol can also produce a remineralizing effect.