

# Caring for Your Oral Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has created enormous stress and disrupted many of our daily habits and routines for health and wellness.

Are you eating more frequently? Drinking more sugary beverages? Craving unhealthy foods? Eating more carbs?

These changes to your diet can have a huge impact on your oral health. Did you know that carbohydrates, when combined with the bacteria in your mouth, produce acid? This acid attacks your teeth for at least 20 minutes each time you eat or drink, increasing your risk for cavities. You can defend against these attacks in two important ways.

First, avoid grazing on carbohydrates and include proteins like nuts, meat, and cheese in your meals and snacks to help neutralize the acidity of your saliva. Second, maintain a good daily home oral hygiene routine. Because regular visits to your dental hygienist are not possible right now, keeping your teeth and gums healthy at home is key.



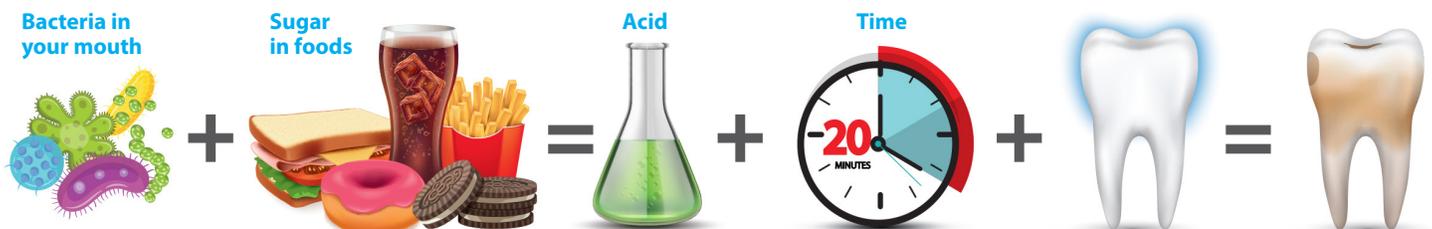
Have your daily oral hygiene habits changed because you are self-isolating or working from home?

## 7 Ways to Reduce Acid Attacks

1. Don't linger over your food and drinks
2. Eat no more than 3 meals and 2 snacks daily
3. Make water your beverage of choice
4. Include protein or fats each time you eat
5. Choose healthy snacks like apples, crunchy vegetables, nuts, and plain yogurt
6. Limit unhealthy snacks like granola bars, chips, and crackers
7. Eat sweets *only* with meals

## 5 Steps to Good Oral Health

1. Brush your teeth twice a day for two minutes with a fluoridated toothpaste
2. Clean between your teeth (floss, proxa brush, soft picks) daily
3. Use an antibacterial mouthwash daily
4. Use xylitol gum or mints to neutralize the acid produced after eating
5. Rinse your mouth with water after eating



Your oral health is important. When you take care of your oral health, you take care of your overall health. Your dental hygienist looks forward to seeing you at your next appointment.