

# Eat Appropriately

## Can snacks substitute 3 meals?

Is it really a blessing to eat well? Is it true that snacking can replace the 3 main meals? Indulgence in eating may not only lead to heart disease and diabetes but may also cause tooth decay and toothache, or lowering one's self-image. Prevention is better than cure. If you want to have healthy teeth, then you will have to begin with establishing a healthy eating habit.

零食能三餐?



## How does tooth decay happen?

The tooth surfaces are normally covered with a thin film of bacteria called the dental plaque. After we eat, the bacteria in the dental plaque will metabolise the sugars in the food to produce acid. The acid demineralises the tooth structure and results in tooth decay.

## What happens with frequent snacking?

Although saliva can neutralize the plaque acids and bring the lost minerals back into the tooth, it takes time to complete the process. Frequent snacking leads to a continuous production of acid. There will be insufficient time for the saliva to effectively serve its function. Hence, the chance of tooth decay is increased. Therefore, the more frequently one snacks, the higher the chance of getting tooth decay.

## What is a tooth-friendly eating habit?

We should regularly have three main meals i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner in sufficient quantities. Avoid in-between-meal snacks, and only drink water to quench thirst. In this way, the chance of acid attack is reduced and hence the chance of tooth decay.



### Healthy eating Tips:

#### 1. No sweets, no decay, is that right?

No, most of what we eat or drink contain sugars, whether they taste sweet or not. Hence if they were consumed, they will be metabolised by the bacteria in the dental plaque to produce acid, leading to tooth decay.

#### 2. How can I enjoy snacks without harming my teeth?

Eating in a package is the key, combine the snacks with your main meal and eat them all in one go.

Example: breakfast plus cookies, lunch plus potato chips, dinner plus ice-cream



#### 3. I like to take soft drinks sip by sip over a period, is it harmful to teeth?

Dividing your drink into sips is equivalent to drinking frequently. Your teeth are continuously attacked by the acid and the chance of tooth decay becomes very high. You better change this habit. From now on, finish your food or drink all in one go and take less acidic food or beverages in order to protect your teeth from decay



#### **4. What if I feel hungry in-between meals?**

In that case, you may take a good snack but limit it to only once in-between 2 meals.

#### **In other words, you are increasing the meals from 3 to 5 a day. Will it increase the chance of tooth decay?**

If you only snack once between two meals, the saliva will have sufficient time to neutralize the acids produced by the dental plaque and remineralizes the teeth. Of course, the more frequent you snack, the higher is the chance of having decay. Therefore, it is better to restrict to 3 main meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) a day.

**Being a generation with proper eating habit, your dental health is guaranteed for life.**