

BACKGROUND

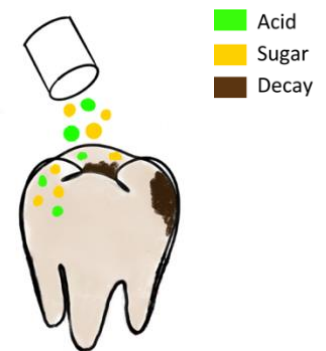
- Tooth decay is one of the most common health problems in the U.S.^{1,2}
- Added sugars present in sugary drinks and snacks are the main cause of tooth decay (cavities).^{3,4}

SUGARY DRINKS ARE ESPECIALLY BAD FOR TEETH

Sugary drinks are a “double whammy” for teeth because they contain acids and sugars.

1. Sugary drinks are very acidic which leads to softening and dissolving (erosion) of the enamel, the outer layer of the teeth.^{5,6}
2. Then the sugar in beverages (as well as in sweetened or starchy snacks) combines with bacteria on the teeth to produce more acid that further breaks down the enamel.⁷

Once the tooth’s enamel is harmed by the acid, decay can easily set in.



CAVITIES AND KIDS: RISKS

- Frequent SSB consumption in the early years increases the chance of having dental caries (cavities) in both primary and permanent teeth.^{8,9,10}
- Duration that the sugary drink is in the mouth increases the risk of caries because it increases the acidity in the mouth.¹¹ For example, infants and toddlers that have consistent access to a sippy cup or bottle may be sipping a sugary drink for prolonged period of time.¹²

CAVITIES AND KIDS: CONSEQUENCES

- Problems at school.
 - Children with poor oral health are more likely to miss school because of dental problems.^{13,14}
 - In turn this leads to lost Average Daily Attendance (ADA) funds for school districts.
 - Children with poor oral health tend to do less well in school.^{15,16}
- Children with poor oral health have more emergency room visits and hospitalizations.^{17,18}
- Severe tooth decay can harm children's quality of life - it can cause dental pain; problems eating, sleeping, playing and concentrating in school; and poorer self-esteem.¹⁹
- Sugary drinks and tooth decay harm some children more than others because:
 - Sugary drink marketing is disproportionately targeted to youth of color,²⁰
 - There are differences in sugary drink consumption,

- Black and Latino children, youth, and young adults consume more sugary drinks than do their white and Asian counterparts;²¹
- Because they often lack access to oral health care, Hispanic and Black children are more likely to have tooth decay, as are children in households with low-income.^{22,23,24}

BEVERAGE CHOICE MAKES A DIFFERENCE.²⁵ WHAT'S YOUR CHOICE?

- Choosing plain water, especially when it is fluoridated, helps maintain a healthy mouth.^{26,27,28}

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GRAPHIC: Courtesy of Sia'h Fanta Jimissa and Lana L. Russell.

The University of California Research Consortium on Beverages and Health includes faculty from every UC campus working to provide California legislators and communities with the science base for policy to decrease consumption of sugary drinks and increase consumption of water and other healthy beverages.
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