

Nutrition Counseling

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The two greatest cavity causers are juice and fruit snacks. Please do not give your child either of these. Children's enamel is very thin and the nerve chamber is relatively large. As a result, cavities start easily and become big quickly.

- Diluting juice does not decrease the risk. It does not matter what the ratio is. The sugar and acidic combination creates the perfect atmosphere in the mouth for the bacteria which cause cavities to grow.
- Fruit snacks, roll-ups, or gummy candies flow in between teeth and stick in the deep grooves of teeth. Even organic versions have high sugar content and are just as bad for teeth.
- Gummy vitamins can be just as harmful to teeth. We recommend giving your child his/her vitamin, preferably a chewable, with breakfast and brush afterward.

Please give your child water in between meals. Water does not contain any sugar and is very good for the overall health of your child. All other beverages, including Gatorade, iced teas, and Kool-Aid have sugar and should be given rarely, not daily.

Milk is important for bone health, including teeth, but milk coats the teeth with natural sugar. For this reason, we like you to give your child milk only with meals.

- Do not give your child a bottle of milk at night or breast-feed throughout the night.
 - Having milk on demand can cause baby bottle rot or severe cavities.
 - We recommend that you wean your child at 12 months to avoid dental complications.
 - We also recommend that you get rid of any pacifiers by 18 months to avoid the development of an emotional attachment. Keeping a pacifier longer can cause the jaw to change its growth pattern which will result in more in depth orthodontic care. However, if your child switches to the thumb or finger, then give the pacifier back and try to wean again later.
- If your child does not like plain milk, encourage your child to eat dairy products, such as cheese. Be careful of yogurt, for it often has a lot of sugar as well. We suggest buying plain yogurt and putting your own fresh fruit into it to minimize the sugar level.
- Chocolate milk should be a rare treat, not a daily one.
- If your child has a dairy allergy, then consult your pediatrician or consult a dietician to get healthy alternatives.

Please be careful with Pediasure or other dietary supplements. They contain high amounts of sugar and can be harmful to teeth. If your pediatrician believes it is necessary to give it to your child, please do so with a meal and brush teeth afterward.

Healthy snacks include fresh fruit and vegetables and cheese. These snacks are healthy for overall development. Many salty items, such as pretzels, crackers, and chips, are simple carbohydrates which turn into sugar in the mouth. They also stick in teeth and can cause cavities. Please be mindful of this and eat in moderation. Sugar-free gum is also a great dental snack. It actually helps prevent cavities.