

## Oral Health Advice for People on a High Calorie Diet

It is important for you to have a high calorie diet. This might mean that you are eating a lot of sweet or sticky foods and drinks which are not recommended for healthy teeth. This guide can help you to balance the benefits of a high calorie diet with a healthy mouth and teeth.

### How sugar harms teeth

Each time you have sugar in food, the sugar is turned into acid by the bacteria in the mouth. This acid can attack the teeth for almost an hour after eating the sugar. If you have sweet food or drink frequently as snacks, your teeth suffer many hours of acid attack during the day. This is even worse if the sweet food or drink is sticky. The longer it sticks, the longer the teeth are under attack. It is better to eat sweets quickly and finish them off in one sitting rather than making them last all day.

### Useful tips for healthy teeth

1. Visit the dentist regularly. Tell them about your diet and ask about protective treatments for teeth, like fluoride varnish or fissure sealants.
2. Clean your teeth, gums and tongue thoroughly twice every day, especially last thing at night. Use a small headed, medium-textured toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. Use just a smear of fluoride toothpaste for babies and children under three years, and a pea-sized amount for three years and above. Spit after brushing - don't rinse.
3. Chew sugar free chewing gum for 20 minutes after eating sweet foods. This will help to neutralise the acid in the mouth.
4. Any sweets or fizzy drinks should be taken through a straw. Don't swish them around your teeth.
5. Sweets such as toffee, fudge, chews and boiled sweets stick to teeth like glue. Sweets which are not so sticky will melt away quickly and can be used to boost your calorie intake.
6. Don't forget that medicines can be sugary as well. Try to take them at mealtimes if possible. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if there is a sugar free alternative.

**For further advice or information please contact:**

**Coventry Dental Service, Oral Health Promotion  
024 7696 1556 or 024 7696 1327**

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