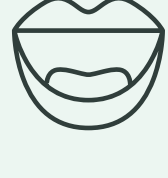


Did you know what you eat and drink has a direct effect on the health of your mouth? And the health of your mouth has a direct effect on what you can eat and your subsequent nutrition.



## WHAT EFFECT DOES MY ORAL HEALTH HAVE ON MY NUTRITION?



Oral health is essential to obtaining proper nutrition, as healthy teeth and strong supporting structures (gums and underlying bone) create adequate force for chewing food.

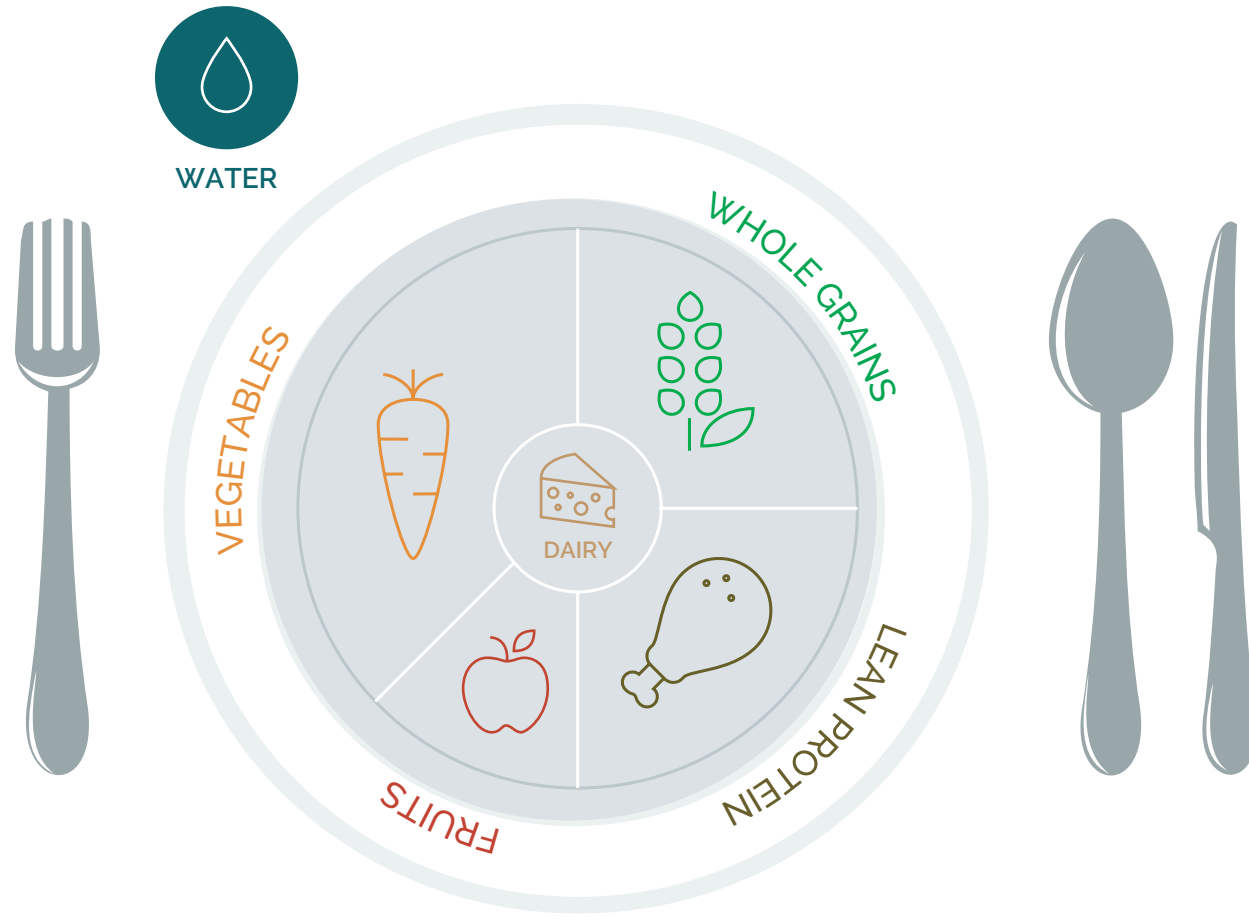
**Chewing** is the essential first step in the digestive process. Chewing also increases saliva production to lubricate the mouth and aid in swallowing.

Without a full set of healthy teeth, your ability to chew properly and completely decreases. People with loose, unstable teeth generate less chewing force. **When we cannot adequately grind our food the body will not get all of the nutrients it needs.**

## WILL A BALANCED DIET PROMOTE HEALTHY TEETH?

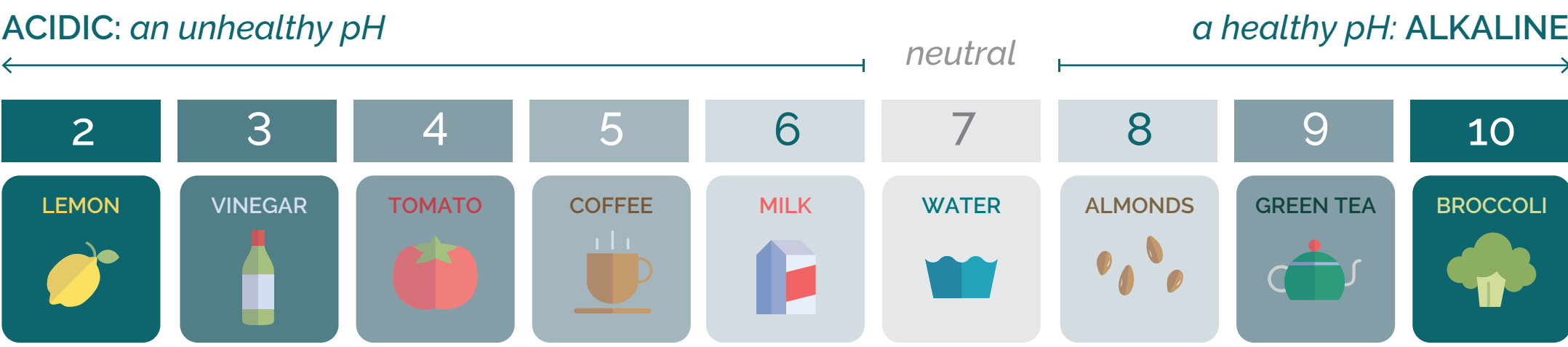
To promote good oral health, you must choose foods that are unlikely to damage the teeth through decay, acid erosion, and fractures. **The most common culprit of cavity-causing decay in the mouth is a pH imbalance.**

WATER	WHOLE GRAINS	FRUITS	VEGETABLES	LEAN PROTIEN	DAIRY
The best beverage for your teeth is plain water. Staying well hydrated supports good function of your salivary glands and promotes a healthy pH in your mouth.	When it comes to whole grains, use this simple rule for healthy choices; the longer it takes to cook, the more complex the carbohydrates are. Thus the better it is for your teeth.	Fruits are important to your diet. Unfortunately, most are also acidic, which can damage teeth through acid erosion. Enjoy your fruit with a meal to minimize damage and keep your diet balanced.	When consumed raw, most vegetables can have a plaque-removing effect on your teeth. Raw vegetables like celery, carrots, and spinach are wonderful choices for healthy teeth!	Lean beef, poultry, fish, beans, and other legumes help support the health of your immune system and the mouth in general. They carry little to no risk for causing cavities!	Dairy foods like milk, cheese, and yogurt are a wonderful source of Calcium and other vitamins necessary for great oral health!



## WHAT ARE THE WORST FOODS AND DRINKS FOR MY TEETH?

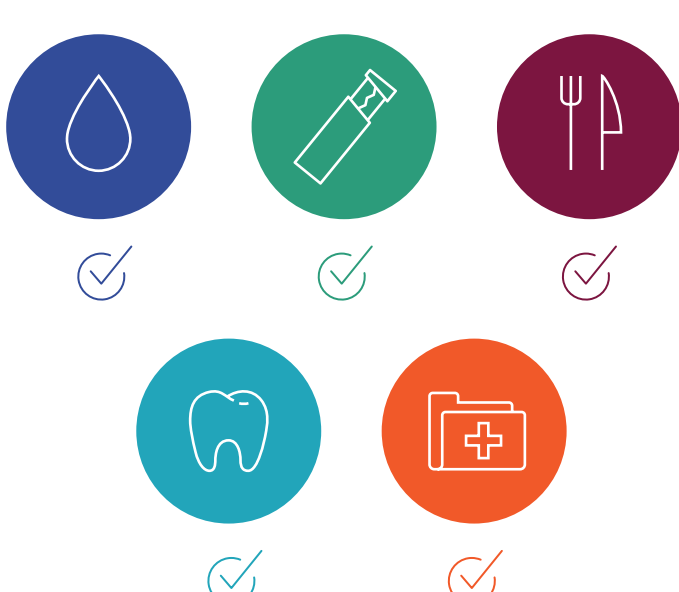
In contrast, many foods carry a high risk for damaging your teeth. These "bad" foods can increase your likelihood for cavities, contribute to acid erosion, or aid in the development of cracks or tooth fractures.



- 1. High Sugar**  
 Foods and drinks with a high sugar content are bad for your teeth. The simple carbohydrates in sodas, juices, cookies, candy, etc., are sources of fuel for the bacteria that cause cavities. When you eat and drink items with a high sugar content, *you are feeding the bacteria that destroy teeth.*
- 2. Highly Acidic**  
 When exposed to acid for too long, tooth enamel will dissolve and leave teeth vulnerable to cavities. Many drinks, like sodas, fruit juices, sports drinks, and even some bottled water can be highly acidic.
- 3. Hard Textures**  
 When we chew things that are extremely hard, we risk cracking and breaking our teeth. This means very hard nuts, crusty breads, and chewing ice can all be risky.
- 4. Dehydration**  
 As mentioned earlier, saliva is a very important defense in the health of your mouth. When you're dehydrated, the mouth has a higher risk for cavities, gum disease, and mouth sores. Drinking large amounts of caffeine or alcohol, or consuming foods with a high salt content can contribute to dehydration and dry mouth.

## YOU CAN STILL ENJOY SOME "BAD FOODS"

We don't want to spoil all of your fun! You can still periodically enjoy some "bad foods" and maintain good oral health. **Here are some tips:** →



1. Drink plenty of water
2. Chew sugar-free gum
3. Wait for mealtime  
*(when your mouth produces the most saliva)*
4. Brush and floss often
5. Visit your dentist regularly

## HEALTHY FOODS FOR HEALTHY TEETH: YOUR NEXT STEPS

We love helping people make healthy choices and maintain great oral health. If you are cavity-prone or have active gum disease, try some of these diet tips to improve your oral health for life.