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## Healthy Sunday Topic: Nutrition and Dental Health



According to Desiree T. Palmer, DMD. **“A nutritious diet and a good oral hygiene regiment is essential in maintaining a healthy lifestyle”**

A balanced, nutritious diet is essential to healthy living. If your nutrition is poor, the first signs can often show up in your oral health. Like many areas of the body, your mouth is teeming with bacteria, most of them harmless.

Normally the body's natural defenses and good oral health care, such as daily brushing and flossing, can keep these bacteria under control. However, without proper oral hygiene, bacteria can reach levels that might lead to oral infections, such as tooth decay and gum disease.

**Desiree T. Palmer, DMD**

### What Can You Do?

- Regular check-ups and cleanings (twice a year) with your dentist are important steps in maintaining good oral health.
- Brush twice a day and floss teeth at least once a day. Night time brushing and flossing is most important.
- In areas with low fluoride levels in the community water supply, use a toothpaste or mouthwash containing fluoride.
- Limit foods and beverages that are high in simple carbohydrates or sugar. Choose healthy snacks with low levels of sugar. Avoid acidic drinks including sodas and sports drinks which cause acid erosion to tooth enamel.



## March is National Nutrition Month



Research shows that adequate nutrition is essential not only for overall physical health, but also for the development and maintenance of a healthy mouth—especially the teeth and gums. The relationship between diet and oral health is clear. Good nutrition has a role in preventing tooth decay and gum disease and the health of our teeth and gums helps determine the type of foods we can eat. In fact, when we are lacking one or more nutrients in our diet, the first symptoms of deficiency often manifest in the mouth (usually with vitamin C, B-complex vitamins, and protein deficiency). Good oral health practices begin early in life and should be maintained throughout life.

### **Foods That May Benefit Oral Health:**

Cheese, milk, plain yogurt, leafy greens and almonds due to their high amounts of calcium and nutrients they provide. Fruits and vegetables are a great source for healthy smiles since they are high in water and fiber which balance the sugars they contain and help to clean the teeth. Water, particularly fluoridated water, is the most tooth friendly beverage.



### **REMEMBER YOUR ABC's**

**A**lways the right nutrition, **B**rush and floss teeth after meals, and get **C**heckups every 6 months

#### **For more information go to:**

North Carolina Dental Health Fund  
[www.ncdental.org](http://www.ncdental.org)  
919-677-1397 (dental health for the underserved)  
Shaping America's Youth®  
[www.shapingamericasyouth.org](http://www.shapingamericasyouth.org)

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**REMEMBER Healthy People 2020: A Clear Vision to Healthy Living!**