

Chew on this...

You know how your mom told you not to snack between meals? Besides ruining your dinner, snacking on foods high in sugar can lead to cavities. That's because sugary snack foods are usually high in sucrose, a form of sugar that the bacteria in your mouth feast on, generating more bacteria and increasing acid levels. The acid eats away at the enamel of your teeth and eventually leads to cavities.

No more sugar?

While eliminating all sugars and starch from your diet would stop this process, it would be very difficult to achieve a diet void of these items on a continual basis. A better solution is to choose a sugar substitute that does not promote tooth decay, such as xylitol.

What is xylitol?

Xylitol is a naturally occurring sugar alcohol that is found in many fruits and vegetables and is often used as a sweetener in a variety of foods. Xylitol has demonstrated anti-decay capabilities due to competitive inhibition, which means that bacteria in your mouth can't feed off xylitol. Bacteria are starved, therefore limiting production of more bacteria and reducing the risk for cavities.

With so many sugary snacks such as soda pop available for easy consumption, it's important to take extra care of your teeth. You can help prevent cavities by selecting food items that contain xylitol, such as chewing gum. If you regularly chew gum, why not select a product that can help keep your mouth healthy and cavity-free?

A wide variety of commercial products are now available with xylitol—check your local health food store.

