



Prevention?

Which foods can you recommend for better oral health?

When patients are asking what can they do to prevent dental problems normally they just hear about things to avoid to protect their teeth and gums (like sugar, acidic juices, smoking, etc.) but what about things they should be eating? Recommend these science based nutrition tips and your patients will be grateful!



KULZER
MITSUI CHEMICALS GROUP

Prevention? Which foods can you recommend for better oral health?

Flowering plants

An Italian review looked at the “anti-cariogenic” properties of polyphenol phytonutrients. Polyphenols are found in all flowering plants and have been ascribed anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant and anti-cancer properties. There are thought to be more than 8000 types. In the plant kingdom they serve a defensive role, including fighting off bacterial infections. Since cavities are primarily caused by bacteria eating away the tooth surfaces, researchers started looking into the potential of polyphenols to protect against cavities. And indeed they found that this class of phytonutrients could directly inhibit the growth of plaque bacteria and their ability to attach to teeth, produce acid, and produce plaque.



Raisins



There's a new test available to measure the cavity-causing activity of plaque bacteria. A pilot study was performed to see if the risk for cavities increases, decreases, or remains the same after eating raisins. They took 156 people, swabbed their teeth, waited for the readings to get up over 1500, which indicates high cavity-causing activity, and had half eat a little box of raisins and the other half eat nothing. In the eat-nothing control group, they started out at around 6100 and, 15 minutes later, were still up at 6100. The raisin group started around 5950, but, after raisin consumption, their cavity risk score dropped down to 3350. Although that's a big reduction, note the score was still higher than the 1500 cutoff, indicating they were still at risk—but the risk went down after eating raisins, not up. So, while raisins traditionally have been thought to promote tooth decay, current research suggests that raisins may not contribute to cavities after all. The perfect snack instead of candy.



KULZER
MITSUI CHEMICALS GROUP

Prevention? Which foods can you recommend for better oral health?

Beets and green leafy vegetables

We know the ingestion of dietary nitrate in the form of greens and beets has been proven to exert many beneficial and clinically relevant effects on general health, including maintaining good blood flow and reducing inflammation in general. So might improved circulation to the gums and anti-inflammatory effects benefit periodontal patients? A randomized, double-blinded, placebo-controlled clinical trial of repeated consumption of lettuce juice demonstrated an attenuating effect of dietary nitrate on gingival inflammation. In the placebo group, most of their teeth had no gingivitis, about 60%, but 40% did have mild gingivitis with almost no moderate gingivitis. After drinking two weeks of placebo lettuce juice, no real change, as you would expect. But in the lettuce group, they started out a bit worse actually. About half their teeth had mild or moderate gum disease, but then after two weeks of actual lettuce juice, significant improvements were shown. No more moderate disease, the mild disease rates were cut in half, and three quarters of their teeth had no gingivitis at all. In conclusion, the findings suggest that the ingestion of greens and beets may be a clinically useful adjunct, in the control of chronic gingivitis, and all sorts of chronic disease.

Smoothies with a straw



Smoothies are super healthy but whether with lemon juice or other citrus, they can be sour. Any time someone is eating or drinking something sour, they have to be careful about eroding the enamel on their teeth. With making people wear slabs of enamel in their mouths while they drink a smoothie to replicate a typical tooth exposure, researchers find almost as much erosion as drinking Diet Coke. So, it's recommended that smoothies be consumed through a straw, similar to the advice given for other acidic beverages like soda or hibiscus tea. Drinking juice through a straw has less of an acidic effect than swishing it around in your mouth. It is also recommended to wait at least an hour before brushing so as not to brush the enamel in a softened state; plus rinsing the mouth with water after drinking smoothies can help rinse away some of the acids to protect the teeth.



KULZER
MITSUI CHEMICALS GROUP

Prevention? Which foods can you recommend for better oral health?

Black raspberries

Risk of oral cancer can be reduced by avoiding all forms of tobacco, restricting alcohol consumption, avoiding obesity and eating at least five servings of vegetables and fruits a day. But what if someone already has precancerous changes in their mouth? Black raspberries appear to selectively inhibit the growth of both malignant and premalignant cells, but not normal cells, just what we want. This was proved both in a petri dish and also on people.



Tomatoes



Lycopene is the powerful antioxidant pigment that makes tomatoes red. It worked against gingivitis, when it was injected directly into the gum pocket with a syringe. But does it work by just eating it? A randomized placebo-controlled clinical trial was made on the efficacy of lycopene in the treatment of gingivitis. Two weeks of less than a single tomato-a-day worth of lycopene versus placebo for two weeks, both along with the standard dental treatment, which helped – a 10 to 20 % reduction in gingivitis in the placebo group, but nearly 30% improvement within just one week in the lycopene group. This was just like the amount of lycopene found in a teaspoon and a half of tomato paste a day.



KULZER
MITSUI CHEMICALS GROUP

Sources:

- <https://nutritionfacts.org/questions/foods-to-protect-teeth-and-gums/>
- <https://nutritionfacts.org/2018/10/16/raisins-and-dental-health/>
- <https://nutritionfacts.org/2018/07/17/is-triclosan-antibacterial-toothpaste-safe/>
- <https://nutritionfacts.org/2017/11/30/why-its-better-to-drink-green-smoothies-with-a-straw/>
- <https://nutritionfacts.org/2016/01/21/making-your-own-mouthwash/>
- <https://nutritionfacts.org/video/black-raspberries-versus-oral-cancer/>
- <https://nutritionfacts.org/video/best-foods-for-halitosis-and-gingivitis/>
- <https://nutritionfacts.org/video/best-food-for-periodontal-disease-and-gingivitis/>



KULZER
MITSUI CHEMICALS GROUP