

# SoftDrinks

## The beverage of choice

For many people, soft drinks are the beverage of choice. But if you drink them all day long, you may not realize the damage you can be doing to your teeth. The damage is two-fold.

## Tooth decay caused by soft drinks

First, soft drinks can contain 10 to 12 teaspoons of sugar per serving.

So, when you drink a soda, you are essentially bathing your teeth in liquid sugar.

The bacteria that naturally live on your teeth feed on that sugar and produce acid. Without proper care, the acid dissolves the surface of your teeth and creates a cavity.

## Dental erosion caused by soft drinks

Second, soft drinks—especially diet sodas—contain acids.

The acids wash over your teeth, affecting the entire tooth structure. Over time, they erode the hard, protective enamel, causing your teeth to get thinner and expose the sensitive dentin layer inside your tooth.

When the dentin layer is exposed, you may become sensitive to hot, cold, and sweet foods. And your teeth can appear yellow.

As your teeth continue to get thinner, the edges can crumble and lose their natural shape. When the enamel is worn away, it exposes the dentin layer to both decay and pain.



*One soda = 10–12 tsp of sugar*



*Dentin layer showing through enamel*

This is not a problem only for adults. Children and teens can have frequent access to soft drinks. Because their teeth are still forming, the damage to them can be great.

Colas (regular and diet), sports drinks, energy drinks, vitamin waters, fruit juices, teas, blended coffee drinks and wine all contain the sugars that can damage your teeth. A 16-ounce blended coffee drink can contain 500 calories and 69 grams of sugar.

## Better choices

Your best choices for a beverage are milk, and of course, fluoridated water.

If you must drink soft drinks—

- ❖ Use a straw.
- ❖ Do not drink for extended periods of time.
- ❖ Do not hold the liquid in your mouth before swallowing.
- ❖ Cut down on the amount you consume.
- ❖ After you drink, rinse your mouth with fluoridated water.
- ❖ Wait at least 20 minutes before brushing.

With smarter choices and regular check-ups, you can protect the health of your teeth for years to come.