



Dr. Linda Golden—Rituals and Functional Food for Your Teeth

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Most people know the obvious regarding oral health. Eat right, brush, floss and/or use your Waterpik after each meal. But do you understand why?

When you drink and eat starchy or sugary foods, you're not only feeding yourself and feeding an inflammatory cycle throughout your entire body; you are also directly feeding the plaque that can cause havoc in your mouth. Sugars or starches in your food and then left in your mouth make contact with the plaque that is already there. The combination of the plaque and the sugars create an acid that can attack teeth for a half hour or more. The continuation of this cycle leads to multiple attacks each day on your teeth that can break down the enamel on the surface of teeth, leading to tooth decay. Plaque also produces toxins that attack the gums and bone supporting the teeth. Brushing, flossing and Waterpiking after each meal is essential to both oral hygiene and supporting the structure of your jaw.

It is important for your teeth and Dr. Linda J. Golden, DDS your entire body that you try and cut down on sugar. A bacterium in your mouth relies on sugar to produce more plaque. I especially remind my patients to avoid any food that combines sugar and stickiness. Such foods like gummy bears that remain on your teeth utilizing their stickiness to adhere longer than normal sugar and starches.

Did you know there are functional foods specific for oral health as well? As a holistic dentist, I am always educating my patients on the foods that provide a natural way to protect and nurture your teeth and gums. For this article, I offer two suggestions regarding foods that provide protection and support to a healthy oral cavity.

Tea – Some studies show that tea, especially black tea, fights the bacteria that causes halitosis, or bad breath.

Xylitol – Xylitol is a natural sweetener derived from the fibrous parts of plants. It does not break down like sugar and can help keep a neutral pH level in the mouth. Xylitol also prevents bacteria from sticking to the teeth. This is how it protects the teeth from tooth decay. With the dental benefits of xylitol, the acid attack that would otherwise last for more than a half an hour is stopped. There are numerous xylitol-containing products, including mints and sugarless chewing gum. Chewing gum boosts saliva secretion, which itself helps clear away some bacteria.

