

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Healthy Kids Dental Newsletter



Five teeth-staining foods and four tricks to fight back

There are many common foods and drinks that can break down enamel, stain your teeth and cause tooth decay and other issues.

Tricky foods

1. **Tea and coffee** contain acids that are tough on your teeth. They also change the pH of your mouth, leaving teeth at higher risk of staining from other acidic things you eat or drink.
2. **Sugary candy and sweets** can change your mouth's chemistry. The sugar allows bacteria to thrive in your mouth and create an excess of damaging acid.
3. **Soda** is high in acids and sugar; both bad for oral health.
4. **Fruit juice** has a lot of sugar, and oftentimes dyes, which can stain your teeth.
5. **Citric acids** in lemons, tomatoes and other produce have beneficial nutrients. But too much can also break down enamel.

Tricks to fight back

1. **Drinking water** is one of the best ways to keep your teeth stain-free and healthy. Water rinses away food and other junk. It also keeps your mouth balanced.
2. **Wait to brush** your teeth until an hour or so after you've eaten acidic foods. Your teeth are more at risk within that hour, so brushing them too soon may cause more damage.
3. **Fight back** with foods that strengthen teeth. Leafy greens contain essential vitamins and minerals to boost your immunity and bone health. Crunchy root veggies like carrots, potatoes or jicama also act as natural teeth cleaners.
4. **Ask your dentist** how your diet affects your oral health. Make sure you know how your habits can hurt and help you.



Easy ways to kick-start your child's oral health routine

Did you know oral health — the health of your teeth and gums — has a major effect on overall health? So, to keep your children healthy, start with their smiles. Here are some simple tips that can make a big difference.

- While you might hold the brush and clean your younger child's mouth, let them **brush your teeth**, too! It's fun and



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you can teach them not to brush too hard. For older kids, brush when they do to make sure they're brushing correctly and regularly.

- **Flossing** is great to stop plaque buildup in areas between teeth and under gums. Keep floss in your car, bag or pocket for your family's use anytime.
- **Drinking water** keeps the body hydrated and helps wash away food particles. It also contains minerals that strengthen tooth enamel. Every day, fill a jug with water and reward your child for drinking the entire jug or more.
- **Replace your child's toothbrush** every three to four months. Worn out bristles won't clean teeth well. Old toothbrushes can also carry germs.
- **Make your child's next dental appointment now.** Regular visits keep your child's teeth clean and healthy and help prevent problems. Schedule appointments early enough to get the dates and times that work with your schedule.

We owe a lot to our teeth and gums, so help your family take care of their smile. Make oral health care fun and easy. Create habits, not chores. And be sure to visit the dentist regularly.

We speak your language

You have the right to receive culturally competent care. If you, or someone you're helping needs assistance, you have the right to get help and information in your language at no cost. You can also get help finding a dentist that speaks your language. To talk to an interpreter, call the Customer Service number on the back of your member ID card.

Report fraud, waste, and abuse in the following ways:

Report fraud, waste, and abuse in the following ways. You can remain anonymous:

Call:

Fraud hotline: 1-800-237-9139

Anonymous hotline: 1-866-654-3433

Fax: 262-241-7366

Mail:

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P.O. Box 491

Milwaukee, WI 53201-0491

Fraud, waste, and abuse can also be reported directly to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services using the following methods:

Michigan Department of Health and
Human Services

Office of Inspector General

P.O. Box 30062

Lansing, MI 48909

1-855-MIFRAUD (643-7283)

michigan.gov/fraud

Contact us

1-800-936-0935: TTY users, call: 711

Helpful resources available on the website:
bcbsm.com/healthykids



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