



Tooth Erosion

Acid erosion is an oral health concern that continues to grow in prevalence. Acid erosion is the process that leads to the irreversible loss of precious tooth enamel uncovering the yellower dentine layer making the teeth appear yellow and dull. In extreme cases teeth become so thin they crumble and chip. Teeth can start to look shorter and uneven.

Acid erosion is primarily caused by the acids contained in many everyday acidic foods and drinks. As many as 4 acidic challenges a day e.g. fruit juices and soft drinks is linked to increased risk of acid erosion especially when consumed outside of mealtimes.

When acids come into contact with teeth, the hard enamel surface can temporarily soften, leaving it more vulnerable to damage from contact with other surfaces such as other teeth, a toothbrush, even the tongue. This condition is actually on the rise as a result of more people adopting healthier lifestyles and choosing to snack on fruit. Also we now have acidic fruits freely available throughout the year.

We all need to maintain a healthy diet and are certainly not advising that you stop consuming fruits altogether. Consuming them at mealtimes is less damaging.

Brushing too hard can speed up wear caused by the acids contained in food and drink especially if you brush shortly after exposing your teeth to acid. Ideally wait at least 30 minutes before brushing.

Gastric reflux is also a significant cause of acid damage to teeth- if you suspect that you have reflux do consult your doctor.

How acidic are your foods and drinks?

Knowing how acidic foods and drinks are can also help you protect your teeth from the effects of acid erosion.

pH is a measure of how acidic ($\text{pH} < 7$) or alkaline ($\text{pH} > 7$) something is. For people concerned about an acidic diet and acid erosion, the most important thing to know is this: the lower the pH number, the more acidic a

food or a drink is and the more harmful it will tend to be to your tooth enamel. Enamel may begin to weaken at a pH of 5.5, therefore you should limit your frequency of food and drink, which has a low pH and is more acidic, thereby reducing the risk of acid erosion.

If you do consume acidic food or drink – especially outside of mealtimes try and neutralize its effect by rinsing your mouth with something alkaline like milk, water or fluoride mouthwash.

HIGH

Lemon Juice
Wine
Sports Drinks
Tonic Water
Cherries
Carbonated Soft Drinks, including diet variety
Oranges
Plums
Blackberries, blueberries and strawberries
Grapefruit Juice
Pickles
Vinegar
Apple Sauce
Apple Juice and Apple Cider
Salad Dressing
Cranberries
Orange Juice
Tomatoes

MEDIUM

Honey
Tomato Ketchup
Seedless Raisins
Beer
Apples
Pears
Apricots
Figs
Carrot Juice
Tea (black)
Beetroot Juice

LOW

Bananas
Bread
Cheese
Avocados
Broccoli
Cucumbers

Black Olives
Peanut Butter
Milk
Mineral Water