

## **Detoxes, Cleanse... and Dental Problems?**

### **Oh My!**

Tempted to try something extreme when the scale won't budge? Be careful. While that diet may help you win the battle of the bulge, it could impact your oral health.

Whether it's the latest craze or a more widely accepted weight loss plan, your chances for tooth decay, gum disease and/or bad breath can increase when you limit the variety of foods you eat.

Here's the skinny on how popular diets can affect your mouth:

#### **1. Fat-Free/Low-Fats Diets**

Fat-free or low-fat versions of everything from frozen dinners to packaged snacks and desserts have made their way onto the shelves of most grocery stores. A lot of effort goes into highlighting the lack of fat, so most people don't realize that sugar is typically added to improve the taste. Ultimately, added sugar can lead to serious tooth decay and also prompt frequent snacking, which can wear down the enamel of your teeth.

#### **2. Juice Cleanses**

Often perceived as a healthier way to drop unwanted pounds because of its focus on fruit and vegetable blends, the non-stop contact of fructose and acids with your teeth could be a dental nightmare. Devotees who revert to this regimen regularly may quickly find themselves facing tooth decay, enamel loss and teeth stains.

#### **3. Plant-Based Diets**

Calcium, anti-oxidants, essential vitamins and other nutrients are undeniable health benefits of a plant-based diet. However, with a plant-based diet, your teeth are vulnerable to many of the same dental problems found with juice cleanses. Constant consumption of citrusy fruits as well as sticky, dried fruit and nuts can erode the enamel and create cavities.

#### **4. Low-Carb Diets**

Cutting out processed snacks and bread will certainly decrease the amount of sugar in your diet. However, there is a downside: halitosis (bad breath) due to ketosis — a process your body undergoes when it burns only fat because carbohydrates are no longer available. Sucking on mint and candies may seem like a great solution, but these are rich in sugar and will cause tooth decay.

#### **5. Dessert-Based Diets**

Some weight loss plans promise results while satisfying your sweet tooth. In place of traditional meals, ice cream or chocolate is allowed. Suffice it to say, the extreme amounts of sugar — even if only for a limited time — can spell trouble in the form of cavities and consequent visits to the dentist.

### **What You Can Do To Protect Your Teeth**



There are dental pitfalls to every diet, but with a little extra care and attention to your daily habits, you can help prevent problems before they start. Add these to your daily routine to help preserve your oral health:

- **Limit grazing:** minimize enamel erosion by spacing out your meals
- **Brush and floss more frequently:** step up your routine to combat decay
- **Drink water after every meal:** it can help loosen food particles and neutralize acids
- **Choose sugar-free gum/candy:** promote saliva production without creating cavities
- **Visit the dentist often:** keep your mouth in shape with regular exams and cleanings

If you're considering a radical shift in your eating behavior, share your plans with your dentist. Scheduling a professional consultation can help you be fully aware of any risks or concerns based on your current dental situation and history.

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**Sources:**

*3 Fad Diets That Can Ruin Your Teeth.* (2014, November 14). Retrieved June 4, 2015, from <http://www.silveradofamilydental.com/3-fad-diets-can-ruin-teeth/>

*Diet and Dental Health.* (n.d.). Retrieved June 4, 2015, from <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/d/diet-and-dental-health>