



## LET'S STOP THE ROT

Join The Fight Against Tooth Decay



## How to Avoid Tooth Decay

Tooth decay is the most common health condition in Australia. Ironically, it's also easily preventable with a little TLC – tooth love and care.

The Australian Dental Association says Australians should not expect to get tooth decay or accept that decay is inevitable in their lifetime.

### Get your head around tooth decay: how to avoid decay

- Brush for two minutes twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste to reduce your risk of getting decay by 25%
- Floss once a day and visit your dentist every 6 months (or as directed by your dentist) for check-ups
- Monitor your intake of energy drinks, soft drinks, sports drinks and fruit juice. These drinks are acidic and contain high amounts of sugar. Bacteria in plaque feed on sugar to produce acid. The acid dissolves the minerals within teeth causing holes or cavities
- Use a straw and avoid swishing drinks around your mouth. This minimises the acid exposure to your teeth
- Chew sugar-free gum to stimulate saliva (saliva neutralises acids that cause decay) after eating a meal or snack, if you're unable to brush your teeth
- Eat calcium-rich foods like milk, cheese and yogurt following sugary or acidic food or drinks to help neutralise the acids and help protect your teeth against decay
- Drink fluoridated tap water to reduce your risk of decay. Fluoride works by making the enamel of your teeth stronger and more resistant to attack by plaque.

- Fissure sealants can protect your teeth from decay. Deep grooves or fissures (crevices in teeth) can be sealed by your dentist. A sealant is a durable plastic that is painted on to the biting surface of your cleaned tooth. It forms a physical barrier that stops food and bacteria from collecting in the grooves of the tooth and causing dental decay

### Get your head around tooth decay: detection and management

- Early detection of tooth decay can make management and treatment much simpler
- Modern materials and techniques can reverse early decay. Your dentist can only detect decay early if you have a check up before permanent damage is done to your tooth
- If tooth decay is more advanced, a filling may be needed. New filling materials are available, which can be matched to the colour of your tooth
- Eating a healthy diet and minimising in between meal snacking is extremely important in keeping healthy teeth.

## Dental Factsheet

For more information on oral health and looking after your mouth, visit [www.dentalhealthweek.com.au](http://www.dentalhealthweek.com.au)

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