

# Not Hip to Sip!

Caleen Cantrell, DDS

**W**hat your child eats and drinks may be as just as critical as a toothbrush, toothpaste and a good dentist when it comes to a healthy smile, this according to Dr. Caleen Cantrell of ChildSmile Pediatric Dentistry in Frisco.

More and more children today have come to consider drinking soda and other sugar-filled beverages



(such as sodas, juices and sports drinks) to be a part of their regular daily routine. As a result, the dental community is seeing more evidence of early childhood tooth decay in children.

According to the Journal of Pediatrics, the average American child consumes approximately two 12-ounce cans of soft drinks per day. This amounts to twenty-two teaspoons of sugar each day – nearly twice the recommended limit children should have! Not only does drinking all this soda contribute to the ever-growing obesity problem in children in the United States, but it can also play a major role in dental decay.

Dr. Cantrell says that the problem isn't with the drinks themselves, but with the frequency that a child's teeth are exposed to sugar throughout the day. Children and teens who consume sugar-rich beverages have a tendency to nurse several beverages throughout the day (sippy cups, sports bottles, and even sipping soft drinks over the period of several hours). For example, if a child takes one small sip of juice or soda, then another sip a

minute later, then a few minutes later comes back for another sip ...and this goes on several times during the course of the day, teeth are exposed over and over again to high concentrations of sugar and acid without any break. "It's a constant *bath* of sugar and acid," says Dr. Cantrell.

Even with regular brushing and flossing, this constant "bath" of sugar and acid can break down the enamel of the teeth. This acid can begin to harm tooth enamel in only 20 minutes!!

## ***DID YOU KNOW?***

Drinking Soda three or more times a day increases the risk of dental cavities by 179 percent.

Today, kids drink twice as much soda/juice as milk? As a result, milk consumption in school has declined 40 percent.

Your child misses out on the protection of fluoride if they drink only bottled water!

According to the American Dental Association, fluoride prevents between 40 percent and 60 percent of cavities in children and adults who live in fluoridated communities. If your child drinks only bottled water (and no tap fluoridated water) they are missing a valuable opportunity to protect their teeth.

## ***What kind of candy & snacks are most damaging to the teeth?***

Suckers - The longer kids have candy in their mouths, the more acid is produced, potentially causing cavities.

Raisins - Raisins can get stuck between the teeth and cause more oral acid to be produced.

Hard candy - Candy that lasts for extended periods of time causes the mouth to produce more acid (and cavities) to form.

Sticky candy - Similar to hard candy, sticky candy stays on the teeth longer producing acid.

Dried fruit wraps/fruit snacks/rollups- Remains of these sticky snacks often stick to the surface of the teeth.

## ***What kind of candy is best for teeth?***

Chocolate - Sweets that easily dissolve, like chocolate, are less damaging to children's teeth.



### **ChildSmile**

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