



LITTLE DENTIST'S EDUCATIONAL POST

TITLE: WHAT IS TOOTH DECAY

Edson Laranjeiras - September 20, 2026 at 10:35 PM

My Happy Teeth Booklet

Learning About Tooth Decay



A smiling child showing clean, healthy teeth while holding a toothbrush and a glass of water

What Is Tooth Decay?

Tooth decay is a hole or damaged area in a tooth. It happens when germs in the mouth use sugar from food and drinks to make acids.

These acids can slowly weaken the hard outside of the tooth. If this continues, a cavity—or hole—can form.

Tooth decay can happen in baby teeth and adult teeth.

How Does Tooth Decay Happen?

1. Germs stick to teeth and form a sticky layer called plaque.
2. Sugary foods and drinks feed the germs.
3. The germs make acids.
4. The acids attack the tooth.
5. Over time, the tooth may develop a cavity.



A simple. Text-free sequence showing plaque on a tooth. Sugar. Acid bubbles. And a small cavity

What Can Tooth Decay Feel Like?

A child with tooth decay may have:

- White, brown, or black marks on a tooth.
- Toothache or soreness.
- Pain when eating something sweet, cold, or hot.
- Food getting stuck in a tooth.
- Trouble chewing.
- A swollen cheek or gum.

Sometimes tooth decay does not hurt at first, so regular dental check-ups are important.

Why Are Baby Teeth Important?

Baby teeth help children:

- Eat and speak.
- Smile with confidence.
- Keep space for adult teeth.
- Grow healthy habits.

Even though baby teeth eventually fall out, they still need daily care.

How Can I Protect My Teeth?

Brush Twice a Day

Brush in the morning and before bed with fluoride toothpaste.

- Children younger than 3 years: use a tiny smear of toothpaste.
- Children aged 3–6 years: use a pea-sized amount.
- An adult should help or watch young children brush.
- Spit out the toothpaste after brushing. Do not swallow it.

Clean Every Tooth

Brush the front, back, and chewing surfaces of every tooth. Brush gently along the gumline.

Choose Tooth-Friendly Snacks

Good choices include:

- Water.
- Milk.
- Fresh fruit.
- Vegetables.
- Plain yogurt.
- Cheese.

Try to keep sugary foods and drinks for mealtimes. Frequent sipping or snacking on sugary items can increase the risk of tooth decay.

Visit the Dentist

A dentist can check your teeth, help prevent problems, and show you how to brush well. Visit regularly, even when your teeth feel fine.

Tooth-Friendly Drinks

Best choice: water

Try to avoid or limit:

- Fizzy drinks.
- Sweetened juices.
- Sports and energy drinks.
- Flavored milk with added sugar.
- Sweet drinks in bottles or cups throughout the day.

Never put a baby to bed with a bottle containing a sugary drink.

A Super Tooth-Brushing Routine

6. Put fluoride toothpaste on your toothbrush.
7. Brush gently in small circles.
8. Brush every tooth and the gumline.
9. Brush for about two minutes.
10. Spit out the toothpaste.
11. Rinse the toothbrush and let it dry.
12. Ask an adult to check your teeth.

If a Tooth Hurts

Tell a parent or another trusted adult. Arrange a dental appointment.

Seek prompt dental care if there is:

- Swelling in the face or mouth.
- Fever.
- Severe or worsening pain.
- Trouble swallowing or breathing.
- An injury to a tooth.

Do not put aspirin or other substances directly on a tooth or gum.

My Healthy Teeth Promise

I will:

- Brush my teeth twice every day.
- Let an adult help me brush.
- Choose water often.
- Keep sugary snacks and drinks to mealtimes.
- Visit the dentist regularly.
- Tell an adult if my tooth hurts.

Remember

Clean teeth + healthy food and drinks + regular dental visits = a happy, healthy smile!

Disclaimer: This material is for educational purposes only and does not replace professional consultation.