

6 Ways You're Ruining Your Teeth

From snacking to swimming, you do things every day that can ruin your teeth by eroding and staining the tooth enamel--something that cannot be replaced.

TotalBeauty.com identified the six worst things we do, often not even realizing it, that ruin our teeth.

1. Swimming

Swimming may be good for your heart and lungs, but excessive chlorine in the water can lower the pool's pH level, making it dangerously acidic. And that can be devastating to your pearly whites.

The solution: If you are a frequent swimmer, bring a toothbrush to the pool so you can brush immediately after. Also consider using a fluoride rinse.

2. Snacking

When you eat a large meal in one sitting, your mouth produces a lot of saliva, which helps wash away the food particles that can cause tooth decay. But when you snack, you don't produce as much saliva so your teeth aren't being cleaned naturally. The worst snacks for your teeth are carb-rich, including chips, crackers and even bananas. These foods actually work with bacteria to begin the decay process that will eventually destroy teeth.

The solution: Brush your teeth after eating a snack. It's even more important than brushing after meals.

3. Diet soda

If soda is sugar-free, it must be OK for your teeth, right? Wrong. The acids in diet drinks, including citric and phosphoric, damage the tooth enamel. If you consume a lot of diet soda, it means your teeth are continually under acid attack. That can lead to tooth erosion.

The solution: Drink water immediately after you drink diet soda to neutralize the acid attack. Don't brush your teeth, though, for at least one hour.

4. Birth control

Birth control pills work by tricking your body into thinking it's pregnant, which isn't good for your teeth. These hormones can lead to periodontal disease, an infection that occurs when your immune response can't compensate for the amount of bacteria in your mouth.

The solution: If you're taking birth control pills, see your dentist every three months for a cleaning, as opposed to the normal six-month interval.

5. Your toothbrush

Many people think the harder the bristles on a toothbrush, the better they must be, but it's just the opposite. Hard brushes can actually cause gums to recede, exposing the root of the tooth.

The solution: Use a soft brush, which more effectively removes plaque and bacteria without hurting your teeth.

6. Whitening

Tooth whitening is safe. What is not safe is doing it too often, since excessive whitening can damage not only your teeth, but also your gums. In addition, beware of the tooth

whitening pop-up shops at your local mall. The staff is not necessarily trained or licensed in tooth whitening, and consumers have walked out with burned lips and gums.

The solution: Be smart about whitening. If you have questions or concerns, ask your dentist for advice.

6 ways you're ruining your teeth 011412