

# Give your teeth a break and prevent tooth wear: 6 easy lifestyle tips

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Tooth wear is an increasing problem due to keeping our teeth for longer and the acidic foods and drinks we consume, but giving your teeth some TLC can lessen the impact that such an acidic diet might have. Professor Andrew Eder, a leading specialist in restorative dentistry and prosthodontics, provides you with easy to implement tips to prevent your teeth from becoming needlessly worn down.



## 1. Carry a straw for your drinks

Do you know how many drinks are **acidic**? The list includes:

- Fizzy drinks
- Fruit juices
- Smoothies
- Alcohol

The acidity of these **liquids can damage the outer surfaces of our teeth** and contribute to tooth wear. However, if you use a wide straw, the liquid is directed to the back of the mouth and it avoids being swished around the mouth. What's more, the straw doesn't need to be made of plastic. You can keep things environmentally friendly by using a reusable or paper straw.

## **2. Have some chewing gum**

By chewing **sugar-free** gum after eating or drinking, you help your mouth stimulate saliva. The benefit of saliva is that it neutralises acid in your mouth, which means that it will minimise the possibility of teeth being worn away and decayed. If you're not a fan of chewing gum, you could also have a little milk or cheese as this can also help to reduce the effects of acidic foods and drinks.

## **3. Brush your teeth at the right time – and in the right way!**

Unknown to many, you should leave at least an hour between consuming acidic foods/drinks and brushing teeth. If you can't wait, use a fluoridated mouthwash and apply a paste containing high fluoride or calcium phosphate– but don't rinse afterwards. When you do brush your teeth, use a fluoridated toothpaste and brush gently to remove plaque.

## **4. Think about when you snack**

When it comes to acidic snacks (think fruits, salad dressings, soft drinks and alcohol), aim to consume them at mealtimes. By doing so, you minimise the risk that they'll damage your teeth whilst still having a good and healthy balanced diet. If you want to snack between meals, try less acidic food like cheese, carrots, celery, boiled eggs, hummus and pitta. The web is full of alternative snack options that are low in acidity.

## **5. Relax your jaw**

A stressful lifestyle has been linked to teeth clenching and grinding at night, which causes tooth wear. Think about any stressful elements of your life you could influence with some small lifestyle changes, such as reading, having a bath or relaxing before bed. Alternatively, a mouthguard worn overnight could help to save your teeth.

## **6. If in doubt, don't hesitate to see your dentist**

Whether you need to address concerns about tooth wear or would like advice on preventing it, your dentist will be on hand to help you protect your teeth.

## **Making contact**

Please contact [Professor Andrew Eder](#) for more information.