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**THE SEVEN**  
*Eating Habits*  
**OF HEALTHY SMILES**



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## 1 *Limit snacking between meals.*

When the sugars in foods mix with certain bacteria in the mouth, acid is created. Eating throughout the day constantly exposes your teeth to these acids that wear down the protective outer layer—the enamel—of your teeth.

## 2 *Drink a soft drink in one sitting—don't sip it.*

Sipping allows the sugars and acids in soft drinks to continually coat your teeth and wear away the enamel. Drink soft drinks with a straw positioned toward the back of the mouth and be sure to rinse your mouth with water. Wait at least an hour before brushing so there's less risk of breaking down the already weakened enamel.

## 3 *Don't chew ice.*

Your teeth are designed to last a lifetime, but they were made for food only. Chewing ice can cause fracture lines, cracks and chips, which can make the teeth more sensitive and lead to further damage. It can also damage any dental work you may have, leading to pain and costly repairs. Try sugarfree gum instead.

## 4 *Stay away from sticky foods.*

They fill in every nook and cranny in your teeth, are hard to remove and can loosen your dental work. Even foods like potato chips can easily become lodged between the spaces in your teeth. Be sure to brush and rinse after you indulge.

## 5 *If you must eat them, eat sugary treats with a meal.*

When you're eating a meal, extra saliva is produced in your mouth. This saliva helps break down the harmful acids that attack tooth enamel and helps rinse away the sugars.

## 6 *Munch on aged cheese.*

The calcium in cheeses like aged cheddar, parmesan and Swiss may help protect tooth enamel from decay and also increases saliva.

## 7 *Drink water throughout the day.*

Water helps rinse the mouth and is a healthy alternative to sugary juices, soft drinks and other beverages. Drinking water helps not only your oral health, but your overall health as well!



**Be sure to visit your dentist who can provide an oral care plan based on your needs. For more dental health information, visit [TRICAREdentalprogram.com](http://TRICAREdentalprogram.com).**