



### Indulge Your Tastebuds without Spoiling Your Smile

Did you know that indulging in your favorite soft drink could be harmful to your teeth? Because many soft drinks have a low pH level, they make the mouth acidic. This provides the perfect environment for the acids and sugars in soft drinks to attack tooth enamel, the hard outer layer that protects the tooth. In fact, citric acids, an especially common ingredient, can even be found in some flavored waters. The breakdown of the enamel can lead to cavities and allow certain soft drinks to stain your teeth.

The following tips can help prevent enamel breakdown:

#### DON'T...

- Sip all day. This will leave your teeth coated throughout the day, causing more damage.
- Swish or leave the soft drink in your mouth when drinking.
- Drink a soft drink before going to bed.
- Brush your teeth immediately after drinking a soft drink. It's best to wait at least one hour so there's less risk that the brushing will wear away the already weakened enamel.

#### DO...

- Drink a soft drink with a meal, when there's lots of saliva present to break down the acid.
- Rinse your mouth with water after drinking a soft drink.
- Use a straw positioned toward the back of your mouth, not toward your teeth.
- Drink a soft drink in one sitting.
- Brush and floss regularly.

**For information on the TRICARE Dental Program, or to find more "Dental Health 101" tips, visit us online at [www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com](http://www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com).**