

"THINK ABOUT YOUR DRINK" URGE NB DENTISTS

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Fredericton – If you are getting cavities or have sensitive teeth, New Brunswick dentists want you to "think about your drink".

"What we drink every day has a huge impact on the health of our teeth," says Dr. Kelly Manning, President of the New Brunswick Dental Society, and mother of five. "Drinks that are acidic, like diet pop and sports drinks can dissolve tooth enamel over time."

Drinking beverages high in sugar or acid greatly increases the risk of tooth decay. The longer and more often sugar touches the teeth, the more damage it can do. Bacteria that feed on sugar make an acid that attacks the hard outer layer of the tooth, and this can lead to cavities or tooth sensitivity.

Even fruit juices can cause damage. Taken frequently, drinks that are acidic and high in sugar like energy drinks, sweetened fruit drinks and sweetened coffee can cause erosion, decay and sensitivity.

To keep cavities away and protect your smile, the New Brunswick Dental Society recommends taking these simple steps:

- Drinking a glass of water after a sugary beverage will help wash away some of the sugars and acids.
- Wait at least 30 minutes before brushing after you drink. Brushing immediately with the acid present could damage your teeth.
- The most "tooth friendly" drinks are those with a pH close to neutral: unsweetened teas, milk and water.
- It is best to indulge in sugary drinks during mealtime while there is still plenty of saliva in the mouth to help wash away the sugars and acids.
- Always brush and floss before going to bed.

"While drinking sugary beverages may cause tooth decay, the risks are greatly reduced by following good oral health habits," says Dr. Manning. "The trick is to moderate the intake of sweet and acidic drinks and make sure kids (and adults!) stick to their regular brushing and flossing routine."