

## Why is pH so important in cavity prevention?

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Studies have shown that a prolonged acidic (low pH) oral environment can cause an overgrowth of acidic bacteria

Acidic bacteria cause tooth decay

Keeping a neutral or alkaline pH in the mouth can prevent acidic bacterial growth

New dental products with alkaline pH, xylitol, and fluoride are now available



pH is a measure of acidity. The lower the pH, the more acidic something is, and the higher the pH, the more alkaline something is. The pH scale goes from 1-14, 1 being the most acidic, 14 being the most alkaline, and 7 being neutral (like most water).

For years we have focused on the role of sugar in causing cavities. While we know that sugar feeds the bacteria that produce acids, which in turn causes cavities, it is a prolonged acidic oral pH that is responsible for promoting these cavity-causing bacteria, and an acidic pH that is responsible for the demineralisation of the enamel required for cavities to occur.

It breaks down like this. . .

Prolonged low pH in the mouth =

Overgrowth of cavity-causing bacteria =

Death of healthy bacteria =

Caries infection =

## CAVITIES

If you want to stop the end result in this chain, you have to intercept the lowering of the pH, which you can do either by avoiding acidic and sugary food/drink and/or by using alkaline and neutralising dental products.

Conversely, if we can keep the pH of the mouth neutral between meals, we can maintain health. If the caries infection already exists, we can use alkaline pH products to promote the re-growth of healthy bacteria.

- Limit not only sugary/carbohydrate containing items in your diet, but also even non-sugar containing acidic beverages (i.e. diet soda, coffee, tea, sparkling water, alcohol). It is these items in the diet that can cause intense or long-lasting acidic pH in the mouth that then causes healthy bacteria to die and cavity-causing bacteria to thrive, thus leading to a caries infection.

- Consider the acidity (pH) of the dental products you are using. Do they neutralise your mouth? Know your pH.

**Don't just brush and floss. . . neutralise!**