Soda, Sports Drinks, and Juice, Oh My!

What are they doing to your teeth?

Do you ever drink soda, sports drinks, or fruit juice? It’s likely that you drink your share of all three. But do you know what they do to your teeth? Trust us. Nothing good. All three drinks contain acids. Acids weaken the enamel that coats your teeth. That makes it easier for bacteria to sneak into your teeth. Add the sugar found in sodas and juices to the mix, you get something worse. The acid and sugar work together - your teeth are twice as likely to be damaged. Your tooth will not only become stained but also chock full of cavities!

Below you see various drinks you might reach for when thirsty. See if you can match the drink to the description of what it does to your teeth.

1. Despite having the most sugar, only the second worst for your teeth.
2. More than 12 ounces a day is bad because its sugar acidity leads to decay.
3. The most corrosive drink to both the enamel and roots of your teeth.
4. Tests show this beverage can help prevent erosion of your teeth.
5. Lack of sugar leads to a greater desire for sweets and more cavities.

What You Need:
- 4 oz tube of cavity protection toothpaste (active ingredient: sodium fluoride)
- Glass measuring cup
- Fresh eggs without cracks
- Table vinegar
- Teaspoon
- Plastic wrap
- Marker
- Clear nail polish
- Paper towels

Follow these steps:
1. Warm the eggs to room temperature then wash with water and dry with the paper towel.
2. Empty the entire tube of toothpaste into the measuring cup and pat down with a teaspoon to make it flat.
3. Mark one side of the egg and cover the mark with nail polish.
4. After the nail polish has dried, place the egg into the measuring cup, marked side down so the toothpaste covers half the egg. Make sure the egg does not touch the bottom of the cup.
5. Cover the cup with plastic wrap and leave it in a safe place at room temperature for at least four full days.
6. Rinse all toothpaste off the egg with warm tap water and let it dry overnight.
7. Pour enough vinegar into the clean measuring cup to cover the egg then carefully place the egg into the vinegar with the spoon. Rest the spoon on top of the egg to keep it under the vinegar and cover the cup with plastic wrap. Watch the bubbles form on the side of the egg that was not treated with toothpaste.
8. Leave egg in vinegar until the unmarked side softens. This will take 7 to 13 hours.
9. After at least 7 hours in the vinegar, remove the egg and check if the side not treated with toothpaste has softened by tapping it lightly with your finger or a pen. If soft, go on to step 11 with the toothpaste.
10. If the untreated side is still hard, put the egg back into the vinegar. Check the egg every hour or two until the untreated shell has softened.
11. When the untreated side is soft, remove the egg from the vinegar and gently wash it with warm tap water.

What You Find:
By gently tapping both sides of the egg, you can now see two effects:
- Acid has made the shell not treated with toothpaste soft and weak.
- Toothpaste with sodium fluoride has kept the shell hard and strong.

The Shell Game
Here’s an experiment you can do with your parents or within your classroom. It will demonstrate the harm acidity causes to teeth.

The sweet life of taking care of your child’s teeth

Delta Dental

The best drink for children age one or older is water or milk. Cow’s milk is not suitable until your child is 12 months old and, when giving your child milk, it should be whole milk if they’re under five.

Tooth or Consequences
- Sippy cups are the equivalent of a bottle in that it requires the child to suck to make it work. A feeder cup is better because the flow of liquid is unrestricted. This means children learn to drink normally rather than by sucking.
- Limit fruit juices to meal times and offer no more than two per day. Although the type of sugar in fruit juice is a natural sugar, it can still lead to tooth decay.
- Check the label of “healthy drinks”. Flavored water seems like a healthy alternative but some contain as much as eight teaspoons of sugar per bottle.

Some tips for Mom and Dad
How to make sure the liquid your child consumes is as healthy as it can be:
- Water is best at bedtime, but if you do give milk make sure you don’t add anything to it. Chocolate-flavored bedtime drinks and milkshake powder usually contain sugars.
- Always ask for sugar-free medicines and remind your doctor about this if you’re being given a prescription for your child.
- The high calcium content of milk neutralizes any acid in the mouth (the cause of tooth decay) and helps repair minor damage to teeth following an acid attack.

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