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HEALTHY SMILES DURING THE HOLIDAYS

ENJOY THE SEASON, PROTECT YOUR SMILE

Welcome to the November 2026 issue of the CareGuard Oral Health Bulletin.

The holiday season brings family gatherings, special meals, and sweet treats. It can also mean more frequent snacking, sugary drinks, and changes to daily routines.

You do not have to avoid every holiday treat to protect your teeth. Simple choices—such as enjoying sweets with meals, drinking water, and maintaining regular brushing and flossing—can help reduce the risk of cavities.

This month's bulletin offers practical, evidence-based tips to help individuals and families enjoy the holidays while keeping their smiles healthy.

WHY HOLIDAY EATING HABITS MATTER

Bacteria in dental plaque use sugars from foods and drinks to produce acids that can weaken tooth enamel.

Frequent exposure to sugary or sticky foods may increase the risk of:

- Tooth decay (cavities)
- Enamel erosion
- Plaque buildup
- Gum inflammation
- Tooth sensitivity

It is not only how much sugar you consume, but also how often your teeth are exposed to it.

Enjoying treats with meals, limiting frequent snacking, and drinking water afterward can help protect your teeth throughout the holiday season.



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FOUR WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR SMILE

Holiday treats can be enjoyed without forgetting your oral health.

Enjoy Treats with Meals
Saliva production increases during meals and helps rinse away food particles and reduce acids produced by bacteria.

Limit Frequent Snacking
Repeated exposure to sugary foods throughout the day may increase the risk of tooth decay.

Choose Water
Drink water during and after meals. Water helps wash away food particles and reduce sugar exposure.

Maintain Your Routine
Brush twice daily with fluoride toothpaste and clean between your teeth every day—even during travel and celebrations.



SMARTER HOLIDAY CHOICES



✓ Limit sticky sweets such as caramels and dried fruit.

✓ Avoid chewing ice, hard candy, popcorn kernels, and nutshells.

✓ Choose tooth-friendly options such as cheese, vegetables, nuts, and unsweetened yogurt.

✓ Drink sweet beverages with meals instead of sipping them throughout the day.

Small choices can make holiday traditions healthier for your smile.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Frequent sugar exposure can be more harmful than enjoying one sweet treat with a meal.
- Sticky foods may remain on the teeth longer and increase plaque exposure.
- Water helps rinse away food particles and supports saliva's natural protective function.
- Hard foods and candies may crack or chip teeth.

HOLIDAY SMILE CHECKLIST

During the holidays:

- Enjoy sweets with meals.
- Limit frequent snacking.
- Choose water instead of sugary drinks.
- Avoid chewing ice and hard candy.
- Brush twice daily with fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between your teeth every day.
- Pack oral hygiene supplies when traveling.

MYTH VS. FACT

MYTH

"IF I BRUSH AT NIGHT, I CAN SNACK ON SWEETS THROUGHOUT THE DAY."

FACT

BRUSHING IS ESSENTIAL, BUT FREQUENT SUGAR EXPOSURE GIVES CAVITY-CAUSING BACTERIA REPEATED OPPORTUNITIES TO PRODUCE ACIDS.

Enjoying sweets with meals and limiting snacking between meals can help reduce the risk of tooth decay.

HOLIDAY DENTAL EMERGENCIES

Contact a dental professional promptly for:

- Severe tooth pain
- Facial or gum swelling
- A broken or knocked-out tooth
- Bleeding that does not stop
- Fever with dental pain or swelling

While waiting for care:

- Rinse gently with warm water.
- Use a cold compress for swelling.
- Keep a knocked-out adult tooth moist in milk.
- Never place aspirin directly on the gums.

Call 911 for difficulty breathing or swallowing, uncontrolled bleeding, or a serious facial injury.



THIS MONTH'S HEALTHY SMILE CHALLENGE

ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS WHILE PROTECTING YOUR SMILE

- ☐ ENJOY SWEETS WITH MEALS
- ☐ CHOOSE WATER
- ☐ LIMIT FREQUENT SNACKING
- ☐ BRUSH TWICE DAILY
- ☐ FLOSS EVERY DAY

Celebrate the season with a healthy smile.

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