

Acidic Drinks and Food

The issue...

- The acid in acidic drinks and food can erode tooth enamel.
- Acidic drinks and food can also contain sugar which causes tooth decay.
- The pH scale tells us how acidic a liquid is - anything below pH 7 is on the acidic side and the lower the pH the more acidic it is.

Common acidic drinks or those that have a low pH that cause dental erosion include;

- Fruit juices, sports drinks, wine, beer, carbonated drinks and smoothies.
- Orange and apple juices are common culprits among fruit juices.
- Carbonated drinks such as colas and lemonades are also very acidic, as are fruit-flavoured drinks and dilutables.
- Examples of the pH of common drinks include;

- Carbonated orange / lemon / cola - average pH 2.6
- Energy drinks - average pH 3.2
- Isotonic sports drinks average pH 3.4
- Apple juice - average pH 3.4
- Orange juice - average pH 3.8
- Beer, wine, cider - average pH 3.8
- Tap water is neutral and has a pH of approximately pH 7



- Diet drinks cause just as much tooth damage as non diet drinks.

What should you do?

- Keep acidic drinks to a minimum – preferably no more than one small juice a day and one fizzy drink a week to be consumed ideally with meals.
- Look for alternatives i.e. still water (pH 6.8 - 7.2) and unflavoured milk (pH 6.5 - 6.8).

Caring for your teeth after taking acidic drinks or food...

- Teeth should **NOT** be brushed for **at least 30 minutes** after consuming an acidic drink because the acid softens the surface of the teeth and brushing can speed up tooth erosion.

Instead...

- Rinse with water or fluoride mouthwash – fluoride helps to neutralise the acid.

