

THE TOP 3 WAYS
PARENTS ACCIDENTALLY
GIVE THEIR PRESCHOOLER
8 CAVITIES
WITHOUT SUGAR



AND
**WHAT TO DO
INSTEAD**

visit us: www.thedentistdad.com

The most important variables for how cavities are made are Carbohydrates and Time. There is acid on the teeth for 20 minutes every time carbohydrates touch the teeth. So, you will see a common theme: don't eat or drink anything (other than water) all day long. These are all scenarios where I have had to tell parents their three or four year old has 8 cavities, and parents weren't giving their kids candy. Sometimes, the child's diet was healthier than my own! Often times brushing was excellent as well. If you let your child do one of these 3 things, it will almost guarantee 8 cavities by age 5 (or earlier), even if you have perfect brushing technique. Sometimes it takes months, sometimes it takes a few years. Sometimes, they hide in between the teeth and your dentist won't even see them until they are old enough for an x-ray.



**DRINKING MILK
ALL DAY LONG**

Whole milk is good for teeth. It has calcium, vitamin D, and a high fat content. (You can't get cavities from fat itself.) However, milk does contain natural lactose. So, a toddler who has a sip of milk every thirty minutes all day long has teeth which are constantly under acid attack. Don't think it is just dairy milk. Coconut, almond, soy, and rice milk all have different, but similar, natural sugars.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO INSTEAD?

Have a specific snack area. If your toddler leaves the snack area, take away the milk, and only allow them to carry around water. If you keep milk at only meal or snack times, that is fine.



**DRINK WATERED
DOWN JUICE**

ALL DAY LONG

I used to think watering down juice was a good thing, because it lessened the total sugar. But I was wrong. While it may be better calorie wise, it ends up backfiring big time for teeth. What happens is... your child forgets how to drink water. The watered down juice is too similar to water. Then, watered-down juice is sipped on all day long, the teeth never get a break, and it is an easy way to get cavities by age two or three!

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO INSTEAD?

The best thing is: no juice. If I do give my kids "juice", I make or buy smoothies that have fiber in them. The thicker smoothie doesn't get confused with water. I also give them a sip of water when they are done. Psychologically, it is also easier for me to say "no" to smoothies.



**EATING
CRACKERS**

ALL DAY LONG

This is the one I didn't discover until a few years after dental school. (Now I am trying to educate the world about it.) That starch isn't any worse for kids than bread is, it is simply dry and sticky, and easy to get addicted to. It also gets stuck in between the teeth, so you can have perfect checkups for years until they are finally discovered on an xray.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO INSTEAD?

If you simply switch to bread instead of crackers (and keep snack times organized), bread is much less sticky than "dried bread" (aka crackers.) Crackers are probably responsible for half of the cavities in preschoolers alone, because they are nutritious, but not good for teeth, so parents don't expect it. Simply limiting crackers to once a day a less would be a huge improvement for most preschoolers. I personally keep them out of my house.

For more practical advice, and exactly what to do to keep your kids cavity free with less work

© Dr. Roger W. Lucas, DDS.

Dentist and Doctors - have permission to print for patient use.



visit us: www.thedentistdad.com