

# Your FIVE-A-DAY under the microscope

To mark Tooth Wear Awareness Month this October, Professor Andrew Eder explores the impact eating your five-a-day could have on your oral health

It is recommended by the Government that every person eats at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day 'to help reduce the risk of some cancers, heart disease and many other chronic conditions'. The general health advantages are not in doubt.

A vital health campaign, supported by World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations, there is nonetheless a growing problem resulting, in part, from the increased consumption of fruit and fruit-based drinks – that of tooth erosion.

The problem with such foods and drinks is that they are acidic, and may cause acid erosion of tooth enamel. The British Dental Health Foundation describes the effects of acid erosion as follows: 'Every time you eat or drink anything acidic, the enamel on your teeth becomes softer for a short while, and loses some of its mineral content. Your saliva will slowly cancel out this acidity in your mouth and get it back to its natural balance. However, if this acid attack happens too often, your

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mouth does not have a chance to repair itself and tiny particles of enamel can be brushed away. Over time, you start to lose the surface of your teeth'.

The good news is that you can make some very simple lifestyle changes to help prevent tooth erosion, such as:

- ❖ Drink still water or low fat milk between meals
- ❖ Limit fruit juice to one glass a day
- ❖ Rinse the mouth with water for 15 to 30 seconds after consuming acidic foods or drinks
- ❖ Chew xylitol-containing sugarfree gum or eat a piece of cheese after consuming acidic foods or drinks



- ❖ Wait at least an hour to brush teeth after consuming any acidic foods or drinks
- ❖ Use a toothpaste that contains at least 1400ppm fluoride and a non-abrasive toothbrush
- ❖ Use a fluoridated mouthwash every day at a different time to tooth brushing, as well as before or after acidic foods and drinks, to help limit the erosive potential

#### WE CAN HELP

Don't be fooled into thinking this can't possibly happen to you or anyone you know. Statistics collated by the NHS suggest that over 75% of adults and more than 50% of children are suffering from some type of tooth wear and, if we continue as we are, this is set

to get worse; particularly so for adults as we are living longer and keeping our teeth longer.

The London Tooth Wear Centre® offers a comprehensive approach to managing tooth wear in a professional and friendly environment. It is headed up by Clinical Director Professor Andrew Eder, a Specialist in Restorative Dentistry and Prosthodontics. He is also Professor/ Honorary Consultant at the UCL Eastman Dental Institute.

This October, the London Tooth Wear Centre® is offering complimentary tooth wear consultations (while appointments last) as part of its Tooth Wear Awareness Month. The consultation involves a clinical examination of the teeth to ascertain whether you are suffering from tooth wear, along with advice to help prevent further problems, if appropriate. The team at the Centre will also advise if you need to consult your own dentist or require a referral.

- ❖ To book your complimentary appointment, simply call 020 7486 7180 or email [info@toothwear.co.uk](mailto:info@toothwear.co.uk). For terms and conditions, please visit [toothwear.co.uk](http://toothwear.co.uk)

