

# MEDICAL MISCELLANY

*IS SPARKLING water bad for you?*

**WHILE** plain fizzy water contains no calories or sugar, it may harm our teeth. This is because it's made by dissolving carbon dioxide in water, which creates carbonic acid.

And this acid, like the acid in other fizzy drinks, erodes tooth enamel, says Professor Andrew Eder of University College London's Eastman Dental Institute. 'Even one glass can cause microscopic levels of the outer surface of the enamel to dissolve, and when we consume something acidic

the mouth stays acidic for 45 minutes before returning to a normal pH level,' he says.

But you'd need to drink sparkling water daily basis for years to suffer the effect — one or two glasses a week won't hurt.

However, with flavoured fizzy drinks not only is there a risk of erosion but they also contain sugar or sweeteners, some of which can lead to tooth decay.

With any fizzy drink, Professor Eder suggests minimising the effects by drinking through a straw to avoid contact with teeth, or drinking it in one go. 'If you sip it, the mouth stays acidic for longer.'

Having it with food also helps, as it will make the mouth less acidic.

