

# by Word of Mouth

FOR THE PATIENTS AND FRIENDS OF DR. JACK B. SHARE

## Our most frequently asked questions about... CAVITY PREVENTION

Tooth decay is both preventable and curable. Remember what Ben Franklin said? "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." His concept is relevant to today's dental care! Employ a "combined strategies" approach from the list below to not only stop decay, but actually reverse it, providing that it hasn't advanced too far.



1. Clean the plaque from between your teeth daily with dental floss by using a wrapping, vertical movement (see our Word of Mouth on "How To Floss"). Woven floss such as Reach by Johnson & Johnson cleans the best. Glide Floss by Crest and waxed-floss slip through tight teeth easier, but don't clean quite as well.
2. Brush twice a day thoroughly with a soft toothbrush and a fluoridated toothpaste. Consider using an electric toothbrush such as the Braun Oral-B 3D Excel Plaque Remover or the Sonicare. But, you still must floss!
3. Use a toothpaste that contains fluoride for cavity prevention...most do. Other options include supplemental, fluoride rinses and prescription, high-fluoride toothpastes such as Prevident.
4. Eat nutritious and balanced meals. Limit snacking of sweets.
5. Look for sugars on labels. The following sugars can cause dental decay...sucrose, glucose, dextrose, maltose, fructose and hydrolysed starch (all cariogenic sweeteners because they are fermentable carbohydrates, that is they can be metabolised by the bacteria in dental plaque). Invert sugar (sucrose converted to glucose and fructose) or syrup, brown sugar, cane sugar, muscavado and concentrated fruit juices all contain sugars. Maltodextrin is not a sugar, but may cause decay. Alcohol sugars or polysols which include sorbitol, mannitol and xylitol (somewhat effective in preventing decay) do not cause decay. Other sweeteners that do not cause decay include aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame K, sucralose and stevia (non-cariogenic sweeteners). You should know the medical implications before making substitutions to your diet. By selecting a non-cariogenic sweetener, a beverage that reduces the risk of dental caries can be developed. **READ THE LABEL OF INGREDIENTS IN YOUR BEVERAGE!**
6. Inquire about the need for dental sealants, which are applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth to protect them from decay. They are great for children, teens and even young adults.
7. Visit your dentist regularly for professional cleanings and oral examinations.
8. Use a "combined strategies" approach by following many of the suggestions above, and remember what Ben Franklin said.

