



SUGAR & CAVITIES

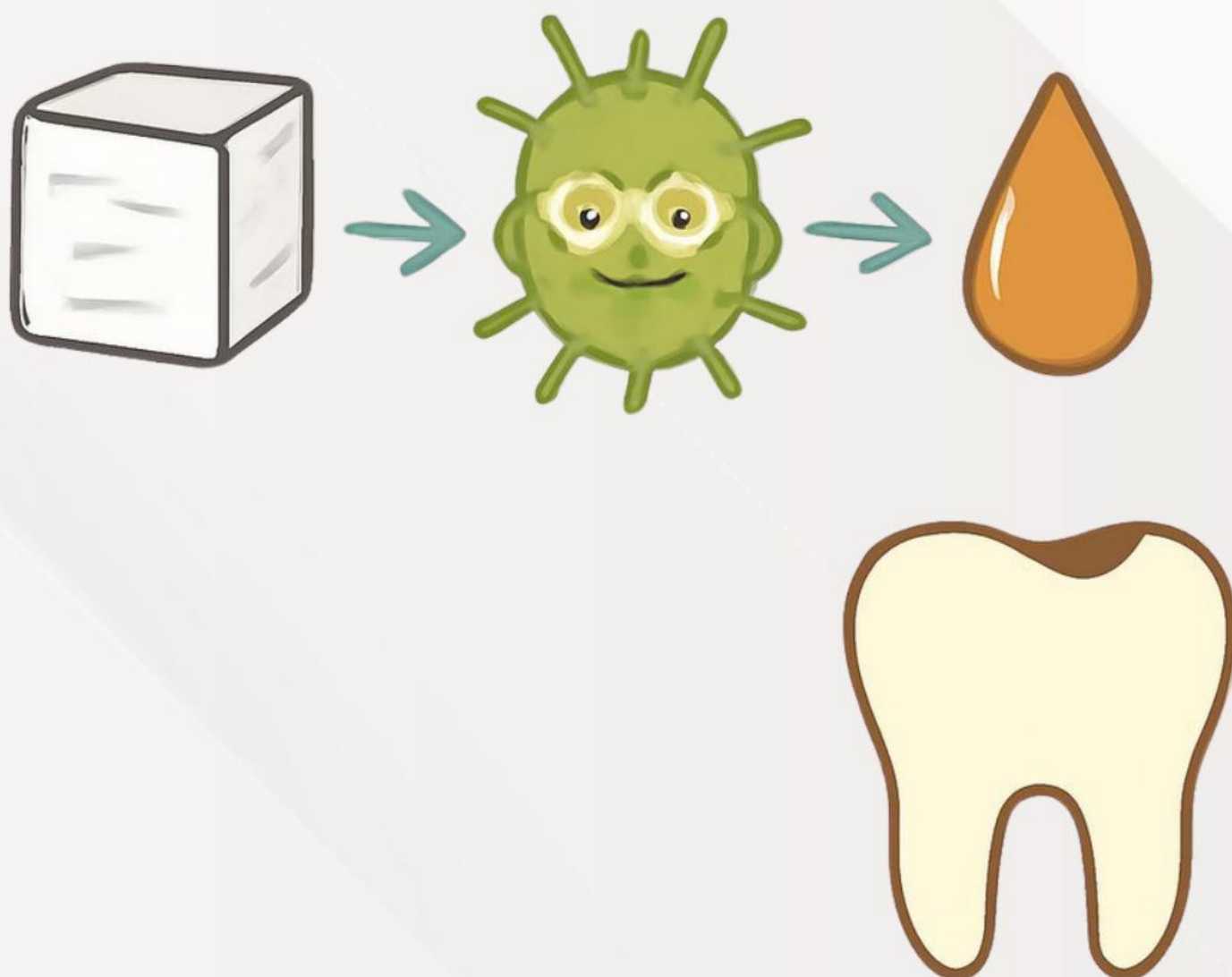
**A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SNACKS,
SWEETS, DRINKS, AND
HEALTHY TEETH**



Does Sugar Cause Cavities?

Sugar itself does not drill holes in teeth. Cavities form when bacteria in the mouth feed on sugars and create acid.

That acid weakens enamel over time. If teeth do not have enough time to recover, weak spots can turn into cavities.



Myth or Fact?

Myth: “Only candy causes cavities.”

Fact: Candy can contribute to cavities, but sugary drinks, gummies, crackers, fruit snacks, cookies, sweetened yogurt, juice, sports drinks, and frequent snacking can also increase risk.

Even foods that do not taste very sweet can break down into sugars and sit on the teeth.



Myth or Fact?

Myth: “Natural sugar is always safe for teeth.”

Fact: Fruit is a healthy food, but dried fruit, fruit snacks, juice, and frequent sipping can still expose teeth to sugar.

Whole fruit is usually a better choice than juice because it is less concentrated and does not bathe the teeth the same way.



Myth or Fact?

Myth: “If my child brushes, sugar does not matter.”

Fact: Brushing helps a lot, especially with fluoride toothpaste, but it does not erase constant sugar exposure.

If a child snacks or sips sugary drinks throughout the day, the teeth may stay under acid attack longer than brushing alone can fix.



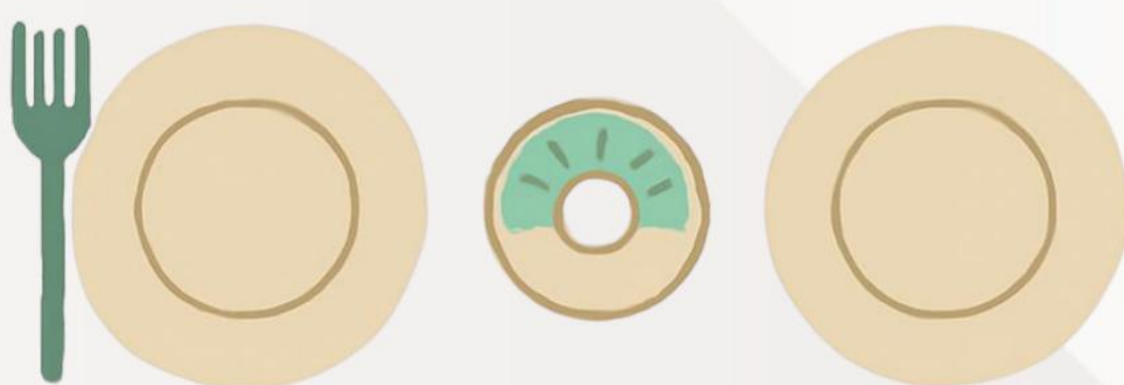
Frequency Matters Most

It is not only **how much** sugar your child eats. It is also **how often** sugar reaches the teeth.

A few sweets with a meal are usually less risky than small sugary snacks or drinks spread out all day.

Try to give teeth breaks between meals and snacks.

meal + treat



all-day snacking



Sticky Sugars Are Harder on Teeth

Sticky foods can cling to teeth longer. Watch for:

- Gummies
- Fruit snacks
- Caramels
- Dried fruit
- Sticky candies
- Chewy granola bars

These foods can stay in grooves and between teeth, especially in back molars.



What About Drinks?

Sugary drinks are one of the easiest ways for teeth to get repeated sugar exposure. Limit frequent sipping of:

- Juice
- Soda
- Sports drinks
- Sweet tea
- Lemonade
- Flavored milk
- Sweetened coffee drinks for teens

Water is the best everyday drink for teeth.



How Much Sugar Is Safe?

There is no perfect “cavity-safe” sugar number because cavity risk depends on brushing, fluoride, saliva, diet, enamel, spacing, genetics, and how often sugar is consumed.

As a general health guideline, the American Heart Association recommends children ages 2 and older limit added sugar to **25 grams or less per day, about 6 teaspoons.**

For teeth, the better goal is simple: keep sugary foods occasional, avoid sipping sweet drinks all day, and give teeth time between snacks.



Brushing Still Matters

Brushing helps remove plaque and food from the teeth.

For cavity protection:

- Brush twice daily
- Use fluoride toothpaste unless your dentist recommends otherwise
- Help young children brush
- Brush along the gumline
- Do not rush the back teeth
- Floss teeth that touch

The ADA notes that brushing with fluoride toothpaste helps reduce cavities in children.



Better Snack Habits

Small changes can lower cavity risk without removing every treat.

Try:

- Serve sweets with meals
- Choose water between meals
- Limit grazing
- Save sticky treats for special occasions
- Pair snacks with cheese, nuts, or protein when age-appropriate
- Rinse with water after sweet snacks
- Keep bedtime drinks to water

The goal is not perfection. It is reducing how often teeth are exposed to sugar.



When to Ask the Dentist

Ask your child's dentist if you notice:

- White spots
- Brown or dark areas
- Tooth sensitivity
- Food getting stuck
- Pain with sweets
- Bad breath that does not improve
- A child avoiding chewing on one side
- Frequent cavities despite brushing

Early visits can help prevent small problems from becoming bigger ones.



Have Questions About Sugar, Snacks, or Cavities?

Dr. Perkins can review your child's cavity risk, brushing habits, diet, enamel health, and dental history to create a prevention plan that makes sense.

Schedule your child's appointment today.

480-525-7110



WHY FAMILIES TRUST THE TOOTH SHOP

Families choose The Tooth Shop because we focus on:

- Honest recommendations
- Clear communication
- Long-term oral health
- Child-friendly care
- Helping parents feel informed and confident

We're here to help families understand their options without pressure or confusion.



Meet Dr. Perkins

Dr. Jaron Beau Perkins, DMD, is a Pediatric Dental Specialist focused on creating a calm, positive experience for children and families. He earned his degree in Exercise and Wellness from Arizona State University, attended Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, and completed his pediatric dental residency at Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. Over the past 13 years, Dr. Perkins has practiced in rural and underserved communities in Pennsylvania and Prescott, AZ, treating complex pediatric cases and severe decay. These experiences shaped his compassionate, creative approach to care. He is a member of the AAPD and AAFE.

 The Tooth Shop™



"My goal is to help every child feel safe, understood, and confident at the dentist while building healthy habits that last a lifetime."

Jaron Perkins, DMD

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appointment today.

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- ✓ Experienced with anxious children
- ✓ Judgment-free care
- ✓ Focused on long-term health
- ✓ Serving families in Gilbert, AZ