

# Children's Health Update

## Brushing Up On Children's Dental Health

(NAPS)—Most parents know how important it is for kids to protect their teeth against cavities, but what they don't know is that cavity protection may not be enough. Today's modern diets—even those that are seemingly healthy—can contribute to acid erosion, a growing and irreversible problem in adults and children.

Acid erosion can be caused by many healthy foods that children consume daily as part of the modern diet, such as fruits and juices. These acidic foods and beverages can soften and wear away tooth enamel. Acid erosion can have a permanent impact on teeth, irreversibly thinning enamel and changing the texture, color and shape over time. Though nine out of 10 pediatric dentists report seeing signs of acid erosion in patients who are children, awareness among parents remains extremely low.

According to a recent survey conducted by Sensodyne ProNamel, most mothers—93 percent—don't think their children are at risk for acid erosion of teeth, and almost half of moms don't realize it can lead to a permanent problem. Once enamel is gone, it's gone for good.

"The popular adage is that it's best to brush after every meal, but children should avoid brushing teeth immediately after consuming acidic food or drinks as this is when the enamel is at its softest," says pediatric dentist and diplomat for the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, Dr. Jessica Meeske. "Parents can also give their children a foundation for acid erosion protection by having them brush at least twice daily with Sensodyne ProNamel™ for Children, a new over-the-counter pediatric toothpaste that can help reharder softened enamel."

Protecting children from acid erosion doesn't necessarily mean



**Modern diets can contribute to acid erosion—loss of tooth enamel—in adults and children.**

omitting foods and beverages that are part of a healthy diet, according to Bridget Swinney, registered dietitian and author of "Healthy Food for Healthy Kids: A Practical and Tasty Guide to Your Child's Nutrition."

"Instead of eliminating healthy foods and beverages that may be acidic, like juices, apples and oranges, parents should be aware of what else they can do to help protect their children's teeth from acid erosion," she says.

Simple steps parents can take include:

- **Know** what contributes to acid erosion. Foods and beverages with high acidic content include soda, fruit juice, ketchup, raisins and citrus fruit.

- **Encourage** children to drink acidic beverages with a straw and to avoid holding them in the mouth, minimizing contact with teeth.

- **Give** children a high-calcium snack or beverage, like a piece of cheese or milk, after consuming something acidic.

- **Talk** to their child's dentist. More than four out of five moms (83 percent) said they have not had a conversation with their child's dentist about acid erosion.

For more information about acid erosion, visit [www.ProNamel.us](http://www.ProNamel.us).