

## Are Carbonated Drinks Bad For Your Teeth?

by Dr. Kyle Dosch

(NAPS)—You may know sugar-sweetened beverages are bad for your teeth, but did you know carbonated beverages can also be harmful to your smile in other ways?

It's true, and with more and more people turning to popular drinks such as sparkling water to cut down on their sugar intake, it is necessary to be cautious about what types of carbonated drinks you are consuming.

The important thing to know is that carbonated drinks are acidic, which can lead to tooth enamel damage and mouth diseases such as gingivitis.

The acidity level of a drink is determined by its pH level. Tap or bottled water generally has a pH level of 7, whereas sparkling water is in the pH range of 4.18-7. Drinks that are below pH 5.5 can damage enamel.

Excess consumption of carbonated drinks and acidic foods leads to accumulation of acid-producing harmful bacteria, which are the main causes for cavities and infections. Drinking both sugary and carbonated drinks in moderation can reduce some of their impacts, including damage to enamel. Once enamel is deteriorated, it doesn't grow back, removing a major line of defense for your teeth.

The best beverages to consume include water, milk, and brewed and unsweetened green or black tea. And while not all carbonated drinks have sugar and not all sugar-sweetened drinks are carbonated, both can cause harm and should be avoided as much as possible.

Some beverages to avoid include soda pop, sweet tea, sweetened coffee drinks, chocolate milk, energy drinks and sports drinks. Never drinking any of these beverages is unlikely, but reducing your intake is a key step in your health journey.

There are also a few steps you can take to mitigate the damage sugar-sweetened and/or carbonated beverages cause including:



### Save your smile: Cut back on carbonated drinks.

- **Use in moderation**—Just as with sugar-sweetened beverages, think of carbonated beverages as a treat you partake in occasionally, rather than something you drink often. The less you drink, the less it damages your teeth.

- **Use a straw**—This may reduce contact between the acidic and sugar-filled drinks with your teeth.

- **Drink water afterward**—Water is a great way to rinse out your mouth and wash away acids and sugars.

- **Don't brush your teeth right away**—While it might seem like the best way to help your mouth is to brush immediately, your teeth and its enamel are actually in a weakened state at this time and a toothbrush could damage them further.

In the end, water is your best bet for keeping a healthy smile, especially fluoridated tap water. Carbonated drinks can be very tempting, but anything that puts your oral health into jeopardy should be avoided.

And when it comes to soda, surprisingly, studies have also shown that diet sodas and low-sugar sodas are no better for oral health than regular sodas.

Ultimately, the more sugar-sweetened beverages you drink, the more unhealthy attacks on your teeth, which in turn leads to a degradation of your oral health.

- *Dr. Dosch, DDS, is the Delta Dental of Washington's dental director and a member dentist. Learn more at [www.deltadentalwa.com](http://www.deltadentalwa.com).*