

# MYTHBUSTERS

MYTH OR FACT: TEST YOUR ORAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

**Baby teeth are not as important as adult teeth.**



**Myth!**

**Here are the facts**

- Primary or “baby” teeth hold the space for the permanent or “adult” teeth to erupt.
- The roots of baby teeth are very close to the developing adult teeth. Injury, severe decay or infection of baby teeth can cause abnormal development of the adult teeth.
- When baby teeth are lost too soon, children have a higher risk of having crowded adult teeth.
- Untreated infections of baby teeth can also lead to serious health problems, including an infection of the brain.

**Brushing my teeth with brown tap water will stain them.**



**Maybe!**

**Here are the facts**

- It depends why the water is darker.
- If your water source is brown because of high amounts of iron, then tap water may stain your teeth.
- The chance of staining may not be the only reason you want to avoid tap water.
- In some communities, tap water may be quite acidic. Tooth enamel erodes at a pH of 5.5 or less. If your local tap water has a pH at or below 5.5, you should not use tap water when brushing your teeth or rinsing your mouth.
- To find out more about the pH of your local water, you can visit <http://maps.gov.nl.ca/water/>.

**Diet soda does not cause cavities.**



**Fact, but be careful!**

**Here are the facts**

- Diet soda does not directly cause cavities, but can lead to enamel erosion.
- Diet soda is acidic, as are sports drinks, energy drinks, and regular soda. This acidity can lead to mineral loss, and enamel erosion.
- Mineral loss from enamel erosion can cause teeth sensitivity, and can make the teeth more prone to developing dental caries.
- There is a high risk for developing dental caries if soda is consumed 3+ times/day, and a moderate risk if consumed 1-2 times/day.

**Having white teeth means your teeth are healthy.**



**Myth!**

- Teeth come in all shapes, sizes and colours.
- The healthiest teeth are clean teeth.
- The best way to keep your smile healthy is to brush twice a day with a toothpaste that has fluoride in it, and to floss daily.

**You should use a new toothbrush after you have been sick.**



**Fact!**

- After you have been sick, you should use a new toothbrush because your old toothbrush has germs that could make you sick again.
- Toothbrushes should also be replaced every 3 months.
- Remember to use a soft tooth brush with round bristles.

**Smoking only makes your teeth look yellow.**



**Myth!**

- Smoking does cause yellowing of teeth, but that's not all.
- Smoking irritates tissues and reduces blood flow to the gums. This can lead to bad breath, cavities, sores, and infections.
- Smoking can also cause bone loss in the jaw, and increases the risk of oral cancers and dental disease.

**A cloth soaked in kerosene, and put on a tooth can safely relieve toothaches.**



**Myth!**

- Please do not try this at home!
- Kerosene is toxic, especially for children.
- Symptoms of kerosene poisoning including vomiting, fever, cough, difficulty breathing, low blood oxygen and drowsiness.

**Chewing sugar free gum helps prevent cavities.**



**Fact!**

- Chewing sugar free gum stimulates saliva, which lowers the amount of acid in the mouth and eliminates bacteria.
- Some research indicates that all sugar-free gums are equally effective, while other research suggests that gums containing xylitol may be better.

**It is okay to eat an apple right before bed, even after brushing your teeth.**



**Myth!**

- Only water should be had after brushing your teeth before bed!
- Sugar from foods and drinks that are eaten before bed can stay on your teeth all night, and allow for bacteria to survive and damage your teeth.

**Clove oil can be used to relieve toothaches.**



**Fact, but be careful!**

- Clove oil has been used as a traditional, herbal local anesthetic, but will not cure a toothache.
- Clove oil should be used with caution, as it can be toxic to skin cells.
- If you choose to use clove oil, then use small and highly diluted amounts.

## References

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