

Factsheet

Tooth decay

Tooth decay develops when the factors that hurt the teeth are greater than the factors that protect the teeth.

How does tooth decay develop?

- Sugar from foods and drinks give bacteria inside the mouth energy.
- The bacteria use the energy to make acid.
- This acid attacks the surface of the teeth. It dissolves the minerals at the surface of the teeth. This makes the tooth surfaces weak.
- This happens every time we have foods or drinks that include sugar.
- If the acid attacks happen too often, and the teeth do not get enough protection, tooth decay can develop.

Watch
*What causes
tooth decay?*



How is tooth decay treated?

If you have tooth decay, you may need a filling. The filling replaces the damaged part of the tooth. The soft tooth decay is cut out of the tooth and filling material is placed in this space.

Sometimes tooth decay can be stopped if it is found at a very early stage. If the tooth decay is stopped, you may not need a filling. The tooth may have a white or brown mark where the tooth decay started to develop. This is like a scar.

Tips to protect your teeth from tooth decay

- ✓ Brush your teeth two times every day.
- ✓ Use a fluoride toothpaste.
- ✓ Spit out the toothpaste after brushing but do not wash your mouth with water.
- ✓ Do not have too many sugary foods or drinks.

How tooth decay develops

