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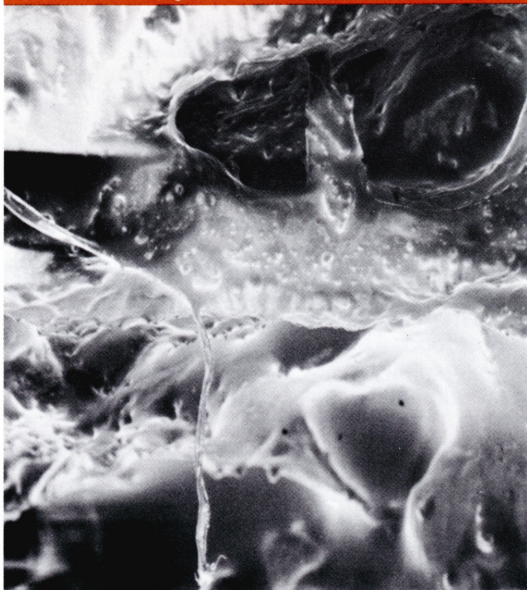
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nutrition and dental disease

Dried banana, x 55 magnification.



nutrition and dental disease

There is more to diet and oral health than simply avoiding sugar. What you eat, when you eat it and how long it stays in your mouth are all important in preventing dental disease. Your dentist and dental hygienist or nutritionist can help you with personalized nutrition counseling.

Keep a daily diary of everything you eat. Be sure to record exactly what you eat ("cup of coffee with tsp. sugar") and when. A complete food diary will help your dental staff to understand your eating patterns and preferences. Only then can you work together to select better foods.

A well-balanced and varied diet that promotes general health will also promote good oral health. Learn which foods are in each of the four food groups, and eat enough items from each every day:

- fruit and vegetables (4 servings per day)

- bread and cereals (4 servings per day)

- milk and dairy products (3 servings per day for children, 4 for teenagers, 2 for adults)

- meat, poultry, fish, or other protein (2 servings per day)

You have been told about sugar. Remember that the amount of sugar is not the only factor. The **frequency** of eating sugar-rich foods, the **length of time** the sugar stays in your mouth, and the **physical form** of the food (such as sticky sweets) are of equal importance in causing cavities.

If you must eat sugar, eat it with meals. Don't prolong the acid attack by nibbling or sipping on sweets. Avoid pastries, candy, jams, syrups, throat lozenges, and dried fruits, with their concentrated sticky sugars, between meals.

If you snack, substitute foods such as vegetables and fresh fruits or their juices (not fruit drinks), milk, cheese, nuts, eggs, leftover meats, pizza, or peanut butter (without added sugar). Read the labels to check for hidden sugar.

Remember, your diet affects your dental health. Your dental staff can help you learn. Then preventing disease is up to you.



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