



## Dr. Linda Golden—The “Why” Behind Proper Oral Health

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Sometimes knowing the “why” behind what we are asked to do can motivate us to do it more often and to do it well. For example, when it comes to oral health, we’ve all been told to eat properly, brush, floss and/or utilize Hydro Floss after every meal. But let’s take a closer look behind the scenes.

Eating or drinking starchy/sugary foods not only fills us up, but we should also be aware that it’s directly feeding the plaque that can wreak havoc in the mouth. After eating such foods, leftover starches and sugars in the mouth interact with the already existing plaque; that combination of old plaque and new sugars creates an acid that can do steady damage to the teeth for a duration of 30 minutes or more. This constant cycle of old plaque and new sugars results in repetitive attacks each day on the teeth—attacks that can eventually break down surface enamel, thus leading to tooth decay. Another drawback to consider is that plaque also produces toxins, which attack the gums as well as the bone that supports the teeth. This is why it is essential to brush, floss and/or Hydro Floss after each meal—it benefits both oral hygiene as well as supporting the structure of the jaw.

A helpful practice known to benefit our teeth as well as our entire body is cutting down on the intake of sugar. “I would also advise that since a bacterium in your mouth relies on sugar to produce more and more plaque, it’s best to avoid any food that combines the characteristics of both sugar and stickiness,” says Linda J. Golden, DDS, of Golden Dental Wellness Center, in Manhasset. “Gummy bears, for example, combine the problematic one-two punch of both sugar and stickiness. They’re trouble for you and your teeth because along with the sugar they contain, they will also stick to your teeth longer than normal sugar and starch.”

Golden goes on to say: “Being a holistic dentist, I’d like to share with you what we call functional foods, specific for proper oral health. Functional foods provide a natural way to protect and nurture teeth and gums.”

Here are two suggestions of functional foods that provide protection and support for a healthy oral cavity:

- Tea: Some studies have shown that tea, especially black tea, fights the bacteria that causes halitosis, commonly known as bad breath.
- Xylitol: This is a natural sweetener produced from the fibrous parts of plants. Xylitol does not break down the way sugar does, and it can also help maintain a neutral pH level in the mouth. Additionally, xylitol also prevents bacteria from sticking to the teeth, thus protecting the teeth from tooth decay. With xylitol, the acid attack that would otherwise last for more than 30 minutes is actually avoided. Keep in mind, there are numerous xylitol-containing products on the market, such as mints and sugarless chewing gum. And an additional byproduct of chewing gum is that it boosts saliva secretion, which in itself helps to clear away bacteria.

“Brushing, flossing, Hydro Floss and functional foods ... the way to proper oral health, the way to a happier you, and the way to a happy 2016,” concludes Golden.

