Tips and Tricks: Healthy Eating for a Healthy Mouth

• Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner, preferably sitting down to enjoy your food — acid-producing bacteria that causes tooth decay remain on your teeth for twenty to thirty minutes after eating.

• Have planned snacks that you eat in a brief time period in between meals — snacking all day increases the amount of time the acid-producing bacteria remains on your teeth.

• Opt to have sweets as desserts immediately after a meal instead of waiting to snack on sweets in between meals — less dental decay is seen in the teeth of people who only eat sweets as desserts right after their meals.

• Foods with sugar eaten in between meals as a snack and sugar eaten in the foods that stick to the teeth like toffee, raisins, caramels, or hard candy generate more tooth decay.

• Beverages like fruit juice and milk contain sugar, and sipping these drinks throughout the day increases dental decay.

• Carbonated sodas like colas and fruit drinks are “double trouble” — the carbonation and sugar produce acid that eats at your tooth enamel.

• Chips, pretzels, cookies, french fries, and bread will produce as much acid as sweets — like sweets, fruit juices and carbonated sodas, foods made with processed starches also combine with acid-producing bacteria to cause tooth decay.

HEALTHY EATING FOR HEALTHY TEETH TIPS

• Eat a limited amount of foods with sugar and starches and serve them at meal times instead of as a snack.

• Limit snacking to planned times during the day.

• Offer children only 4-6 oz of juice a day.

• Choose fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, cheese, and yogurt plus whole grain breads, pasta and crackers.

• If you choose to drink carbonated beverages, drink them with meals and limit them to one each day.