



ACID EROSION

A relatively new problem is becoming apparent in dentistry; this is 'wear' of teeth due to chemical erosion. Often, this results in sensitivity of the necks of the teeth to cold and sweet things.

Chemical erosion is the result of acid softening the enamel. If the teeth are then brushed with abrasive toothpaste the problem is made worse. The result is that the 'softened' enamel is often spat down the sink.

The main types of acid that are dangerous to your teeth are:

- Citric acid Lemons, grapefruit, oranges
- Lactic acid Yogurt, fromage frais, cottage cheese
- Phosphoric acid Coke, Pepsi (including diet varieties)
- Acetic acid Vinegar as in oil and vinegar dressing
- Malic acid Apples
- Oxalic acid Rhubarb
- Carbonic acid Carbonated water ("fizzy" water)

It must be remembered that fresh fruit juices are just as dangerous for teeth as fruit juice mixtures e.g. Tropicana, 5alive.

Why is it happening now?

Many of these fruits and juices formerly were only available in season. With refrigeration these are available all year round and are doing phenomenal damage to teeth. An exaggerated emphasis on slimming for 'health' reasons has not helped.

Preventative measures

1. Limit the number of episodes when acidic foods or drinks are taken. Try to eat all your fruit at one time of the day.
2. Do not clean teeth after having acidic foods or drink.
3. If possible, rinse your mouth with milk or Fluorigard mouthwash after eating and drinking acidic foods.
4. Drink fruit juices through a straw, this allows less acid to make contact with the teeth.
5. Try to avoid diet drinks. If you must, drink them through a wide bore straw or drink them very quickly to reduce acid contact time.

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