



# SEASONAL SMILE

## Protecting the teeth during the season of good food, wine and sweet treats - and overcoming the negative impact on teeth

THE FESTIVE SEASON HAS BEEN KNOWN TO BE THE MOST INDULGENT SEASON OF THE YEAR, WHERE WE ALL FALL VICTIM TO EXCESS. WHETHER IT IS TOO MUCH WINE AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY, OR TOO MANY MINCE PIES, WE ARE ALL GUILTY OF CONSUMING WELL ABOVE OUR DAILY INTAKE OF SUGAR, WHICH CAN TAKE ITS TOLL ON OUR TEETH AND GUMS. ANNA MIDDLETON, LEADING DENTAL HYGIENIST AND FOUNDER OF [LONDON HYGIENIST](#), SHARES HER TOP TIPS ON HOW TO PROTECT YOUR TEETH FROM DECAY AND EROSION THIS FESTIVE PERIOD.



### 1. Use a straw (not a plastic one)

Up to 80% of common tooth problems are caused by acid attacks on the teeth, leading to erosion which is the permanent and irreversible wearing away of enamel - the hard outer part of the tooth.

Wine, beer, spirits and mixed drinks are acidic and have high sugar content. In addition, alcohol also causes dehydration and dry mouth, which can lead to erosion, decay and an increased risk of gum disease. One way to minimise damage when you are drinking this season is to use a straw so the drink doesn't bathe your teeth with acid, or too much sugar.

### 2. Do not skip your bedtime routine

As tempting as it is to come home and fall straight into bed after all those nibbles and drinks, it is important to ramp up your oral hygiene routine.

Make sure you are using a fluoride toothpaste to protect against damage. I recommend Regenerate Enamel Science Advanced Toothpaste as it can help remineralise early enamel erosion. Be sure to spit, but not rinse before bed to leave some of the toothpaste behind to protect the teeth.

Another top tip is to make sure you don't forget to clean in between the teeth too with either floss or interdental brushes, as brushing only cleans 60-65% of the tooth surface. Plaque and food debris left behind over time can lead to decay and gum disease.

### 3. Snack safely & stay hydrated

We all consume a lot of food and drink at Christmas. However, did you know it is not the amount of food and drink you consume that can have a negative affect on your teeth, it is actually the frequency in which you are having them.

The main cause of tooth decay is poor food and beverage choices - particularly those with high levels of sugar. When these are consumed,

bacteria in the mouth thrives and grows off the sugar consumed. The bacteria then cling to the teeth, creating a chemical reaction that then eats away at the enamel. When this layer erodes, teeth become susceptible to damage and decay.

Try not to snack too much in between meals to reduce the risk. There are some safe snacks which can minimize damage, such as raw vegetables, crisps and cheese.

Regular water intake is crucial, not only to keep you hydrated but also to help rinse away acid and food debris between snacks. Avoid coffee shop festive coffees if you can as they have an extremely high sugar and fat content.