

Sticky snacks spell trouble

Sticky, chewy foods—like hard or gummy candies and sugary pastries—cling to the surface of your teeth, where they mix with bacteria in the mouth and produce acids that gradually wear away tooth enamel. Granola bars, many dried fruits, and foods or cereals sweetened with honey, corn syrup, or molasses are particularly troublesome. But starchy foods like bread, crackers, potato chips, or pretzels—which are turned into sugar by saliva— can also be a problem.

To minimize this effect on your teeth:

- When you eat fruit and other foods high in sugars, eat them with meals.
- Don't eat sweets, fruit, or starchy foods before bedtime. Saliva production slows down overnight, enabling cavity-causing bacteria to feed on food particles more easily. Brushing your teeth doesn't effectively prevent the problem.
- Avoid sugar-sweetened gum. Chew a sugar-free gum with the American Dental Association seal of acceptance instead.

