

# Smilematters

## PATIENT FACT SHEET

### Pop Drinking, Poor Diet Lead to Decay

When you're thirsty, what do you reach for? These days, if you're like many Americans, you reach for a can or bottle of pop.

As a member of the Michigan Dental Association, I am concerned that this increase in soda pop consumption is putting you and your children at greater risk for tooth decay. In addition to dental problems, research shows that too much pop can lead to medical problems, including obesity, osteoporosis, heart disease and kidney stones.

Soft drinks now make up over 27 percent of all the beverages Americans drink. Today, the average person drinks 1.5 cans (12 ounce) of pop, or "liquid candy" every day. Males between the ages of 12 and 19 average between two and three 12 ounce cans per day.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease. It is five times more common than asthma. Over 50 percent of children have cavities in their primary teeth by the first grade. Three million school hours are missed each year by children because of oral health problems. And only two percent of 19 year olds in this country meet the recommended standard for a health diet.

#### **Some rather interesting research tells us the following:**

**Calcium deficiency** is a serious nutritional problem in this country. Many people are opting for soft drinks and other beverages that don't have the vitamins and minerals that milk provides to help build strong bones.

**Is your child drinking too much pop?** A study reveals that as kids grow older, the nutrient content of their diets often decline. By following the eating patterns of children

#### **Tips to Reduce Your Risk of Tooth Decay**

- Avoid sipping pop throughout the day. Rather, drink them in a short time with food or as part of a meal.
- Drink pop in moderation. Even diet drinks contain acid that will attack the teeth and result in decay.
- If you can't brush, rinse your mouth with water after drinking a pop.
- Never drink pop or juice before bedtime, or put them in a baby's bottle, because the liquid pools in the mouth and coats your teeth with sugar and acid that can result in decay.
- Drink water instead of pop since it has no sugar, no acid and no calories.
- Brush and floss regularly to remove the plaque that can lead to tooth decay.

from third to eighth grade, researchers from the University of Minnesota found kids' milk consumption dropped from 2.5 times a day in third grade to less than 1.9 times a day in eighth grade. At the same time, soft drink consumption more than tripled between the two grades, most often replacing milk and fruit juice.

**Calcium and gum disease.** Keeping healthy teeth may be as easy as getting three servings of milk or foods from the milk group. Researchers found females with low calcium intakes had a 54 percent greater risk for gum disease, which is a major cause of tooth loss, compared to those individuals with high calcium intakes.