

Staying Up Late at Night of Children and Risk of Tooth Decay

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Abstract

Although the science of dentistry has improved significantly, types of nutrition, misconceptions, and poor oral hygiene, unfortunately, still are the main causes of dental caries that are one of the catastrophes among children.

Researchers believe that this increased risk of dental caries among children is due to neglecting to brush their teeth regularly at night, not waking up in time in the morning, which makes these children often skip breakfast. On the other hand, consumption of frequent junk foods and sweets during the day as the substitution for breakfast is a strong reason that children are more susceptible to have dental caries.

Keywords: *Poor Oral Hygiene; Nutrition; Dental Caries; Skipping Breakfast; Junk Foods; Sweets*

Introduction

One of the most important contributing factors in the prevalence of dental caries is the unusual use of various beverages, industrial juices, and sweet drinks. Unfortunately, some factories add ingredients to their products that increase the risk of dental decay further [1].

Most research has revealed there is a constant correlation between the consumption of sugar-containing snacks, foods, soft drinks, and artificial beverages, and dental caries in children [2-7].

Neglect of regular brushing, along with waking up late in the morning, and skipping breakfast, is a real path to disaster for their oral health, which greatly increases their risk of tooth caries. Oral problems could have a profound effect on children's communication, relationships, development, and general health. Hence, they must learn how to prioritize their oral health.

Does late sleeping contribute to the development of dental caries?

Teenagers, who stay up late, seldom wake up on time to eat breakfast. Therefore, they prefer to stay in bed more and skip breakfast. Hence, for quenching the hunger, they go for the frequent intake of soft drinks and candy, and low consumption of fruit and vegetables during the days till lunchtime. This increases the risk of an inadequate intake of nutrients and elevates the risk of health problems such as dental caries.

A study published in the International Journal of Dental Hygiene found that children and adolescents who prefer to stay up late at night are at significant risk for tooth decay. Some children who prefer to stay up late are up more likely to have tooth decay than children who sleep on time [8].

There have been few studies regarding the relationship between a child's bedtime and the occurrence of dental caries. Mattila, *et al.* indicated that going to bed late correlates with increased tooth decay in 10-year-old Finnish children [7].

Going to bed late and eliminating breakfast from the diet in children could affect their oral health. Unfortunately, children are not aware of that; therefore, to sleep more, they skip eating breakfast before going to school.

Nordlund, *et al.* indicated children who get up tired in the morning, usually skip their breakfast; therefore, they are at risk of ill-conditioned oral health [9]. Oral problems could have a profound effect on children's communication, relationships, development, and general health. Hence, they must learn how to prioritize their oral health.

In another study among Swedish teenagers, the researchers showed that most adolescents have neither breakfast nor lunch, and their consumption of fruit and vegetables is insignificant. Moreover, their daily consumption of soft drinks and sweets has remarkably increased in the last decades [10].

Parents are advised to focus more on their children's oral health habits, even if they are responsible for doing so, and should try to emphasize the importance of brushing their teeth at night and once more during the day for two minutes with fluoride toothpaste.

Surely, children are unaware of the consequences of not brushing; otherwise, they would not forget it. In older children, brushing should be described as an oral health routine in their everyday lives [11].

Although dental caries are mainly correlated to the individual's lifestyle and his control of behavioral factors, it could easily be prevented by keeping proper dietary habits in combination with good oral hygiene [12,13].

It should be noted the pattern of feeding children constantly with poor nutrition, can cause dental caries and tooth problems [14]. It also can threaten the child's health. Hence, healthy and useful meals could help in solving this serious problem.

Conclusion

Ensuring that children get a good night's sleep every night, and eating a well-balanced breakfast every day, is also a great way to keep their oral health, reducing their cravings for sugary snacks. Frequent consumption of snacks throughout the day exposes teeth to the constant attack of acids that cause tooth decay. As a result, controlling the frequency of daily snacks and maintaining good oral hygiene can be effective in reducing dental caries.

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