

Dental Health Week 2023

August 7 - 13 2023, is Australia's national Dental Health Week, which is an oral health awareness week promoted by the Australian Dental Association.

Maintaining good dental health is not just about having pearly whites and a nice smile. Dental health includes keeping our whole body healthy, as there are major links between diseases of the mouth and diseases in the body.

Did you know that bacteria in the mouth can travel to different sites in the body through the bloodstream causing inflammation and infection to other bodily tissues and organs? Six health conditions have known links to oral health:

1. Heart Disease
2. Diabetes
3. Alzheimer's Disease
4. Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes
5. Lung Conditions
6. Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Despite almost half of all Australians having one or more chronic diseases, 70% of people are not aware of these links between oral health and chronic disease conditions. That is why Dental Health Week aims to spread awareness with this year's 2023 oral health message:

“Mind, body, mouth - It's all connected”.

Want to improve your oral health? Then follow these steps:

1. Brush your teeth twice a day using fluoride toothpaste (for at least two minutes).
2. Clean between your teeth every day using floss or interdental brushes (floss before brushing).
3. Eat a healthy, balanced diet and limit added sugar intake.
4. Visit your dentist regularly for check-ups and preventative care.

Limiting sugar intake for good oral health

Did you know that sugar is the main culprit of tooth decay and erosion? Choosing to drink tap water over sugary drinks and fruit juice can help to keep both our teeth, gums and overall bodies healthy. It is important to learn how much sugar is present on drink labels by reading the Nutrition Information Panel. Sports drinks, energy drinks



and sodas often have lots of sugar in them, which is important for teenagers to be aware of, as these are often popular drinks for this age group. However, don't be fooled by sugar-free drinks either, as they also contain acids that can lead to tooth erosion. If you do choose to drink acidic or sugary drinks, to prevent tooth erosion, opt for a reusable straw to reduce exposure to teeth or try to drink at the same time as meals as the increased saliva in your mouth helps to neutralise acids. Choosing to drink water is always the healthiest option!

To choose healthier drinks, look for the coloured labels and go green for wellbeing!

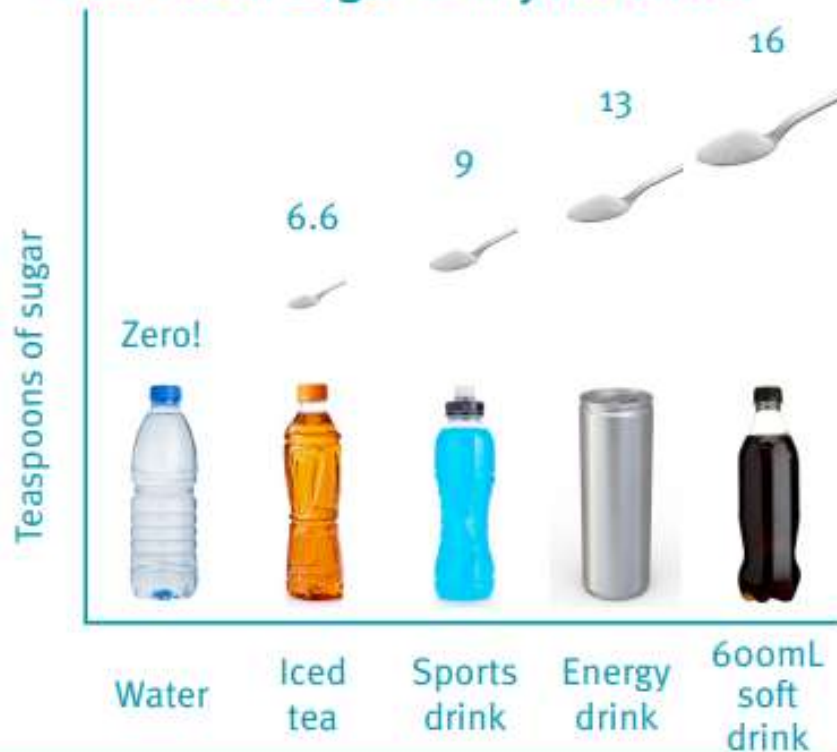


Green: These choices are great for you so have plenty every day.



Amber: OK choices but have them only sometimes and in small amounts.

How much sugar is in your drink?



Source: rethinksugarydrink.org.au/how-much-sugar

We care about you



Queensland
Government

For more information on Dental Health Week, including educational resources, visit <https://www.teeth.org.au/dental-health-week>.

References:

Dental Health Week 2023: <https://www.teeth.org.au/dental-health-week>

Dental Health Week 2023 PowerPoint Presentation – found in Dental Health Week Resource Kit

Health Direct (2019), 'Healthy' juices might not be so good for your teeth:

<https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/blog/juices-and-acid-erosion-in-teeth#:~:text=This%20is%20often%20called%20%27acid,the%20risk%20of%20tooth%20decay.>

Queensland Health 2023: <https://www.healthier.qld.gov.au/healthy-families/eating-and-drinking-well/sugary-drink-facts/>

Image from Metro South Health: <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/poster-healthy.pdf>