

Guide to dental care during Christmas

ELMSLEIGH HOUSE

— DENTAL CLINIC —





From mince pies and chocolate, to your favourite festive tippie, the Christmas period brings many delicious treats.

But what impact does it have on your teeth, and how can you manage it?

Our guide tells you everything you need to know to keep your teeth healthy.

In this guide you'll learn:

- Statistics and trends around our sugar intake during Christmas
- How poor dental hygiene can impact your teeth
- Tips to avoid tooth decay over the festive season
- How Elmsleigh House can help



Section 1 – Statistics and facts about sugar intake

Statistics and facts - What you need to know about Christmas sugar intake

Christmas is fast approaching and it brings many delicious treats and temptations, especially after another difficult year! However, mince pies and your festive tipples, together with late nights (in or out!) and poor dental hygiene can take their toll on your teeth.

This comes as no surprise when we consider the increase of sugar intake, and the variety of treats available during the Christmas period.

Christmas sugar statistics and facts:

Drinks...

- Mulled wine has around 13g of sugar per glass
- Egg Nog has around 8g of sugar per glass
- Cafe Nero's Grande mint choc chip hot chocolate contains 63g of sugar; changing to a regular hot chocolate with oat milk reduces sugar to 28g
- Pret A Manger's popcorn bar hot chocolate contains 50g of sugar; changing to a mocha coffee reduces sugar to 23g
- Costa's medium chocolate orange hot chocolate contains 42g of sugar; changing to a small chai latte reduces sugar to 20g
- Starbucks' fudge brownie hot chocolate contains 51g of sugar; changing to a classic hot chocolate reduces sugar to 28g

Food...

- Pre-made jars of cranberry sauce can contain 7g sugar per teaspoon
- Shop-bought stuffing can contain 4.1g of sugar per slice
- Honey-glazed parsnips have a fifth of your daily sugar intake per 100g serving
- Christmas pudding can have 51g of sugar per portion
- Mince pies can have 23g of sugar
- Christmas cake can have between 25g to >100g of sugar per slice!





Section 2 – How sugar intake impacts dental health

How Christmas indulgence can impact your dental health

Sticky foods

Food covered in sticky substances such as caramel can be incredibly damaging for teeth.

Caramel is liquified sugar that hardens into a sticky goo that sticks to your teeth and can lead to tooth decay.

The bacteria that lives in our mouths feed off the sticky residue, and produce acid that wears away tooth enamel.

Hard candy

Hard candies - such as Christmas candy canes - can last a long time, which is why children like them so much.

However, sucking on hard candy for long periods of time creates a 'sugar bath' and produces plaque acid that can cause cavities.

Christmas drinks

From hot chocolate to egg nog, temptation is at every corner during the festive season, and they are full of sugar, which can increase the likelihood of tooth decay.

In addition, our alcohol consumption may increase, with work parties and festive gatherings.

Alcohol can dehydrate the cell walls in your mouth. This may permeate the tissue more easily, increase your risk of oral cancer, and increase risks around gum disease, which can destroy gum tissue and bone, and can lead to tooth loss and gum infections.





1. Brush after sticky food

Foods such as Christmas cake, pudding and mince pies are laden with dried fruit, which is high in sugar and can stick to your teeth.

And, you may find yourself indulging in boxes of chocolates and sticky toffees, putting your teeth under constant attack.

It's essential to pay extra attention when brushing your teeth over the festive season. And parents should check their children are brushing away all sticky food from their teeth, especially before bedtime.

2. Clean your teeth well

You should brush your teeth at least twice a day, no matter what time you go to bed on Christmas Eve or rise on Christmas Day.

We'd recommend spending a minimum of two minutes brushing, using toothpaste containing at least 1450ppm fluoride, as this helps protect teeth from cavities.

However, you must spit the remaining fluid out, and not rinse your teeth when you've finished brushing, to avoid washing the protective fluoride away.

And, it's good to use interdental brushes or dental floss to remove sticky plaque from between your teeth. It's important to supervise children's brushing, and to remind family members of all ages to brush their teeth thoroughly before they go to bed.





3. Eat and drink in moderation

Christmas is a time to enjoy festive food and drink, but ensure you are mindful of the effects constant feasting will have on your teeth.

It's not always the amount of sugar in your food and drink, but how often these are consumed.

We recommend keeping any sweet treats to mealtimes only, to avoid constant snacking, and to be mindful to choose healthier options.

Consider passing on that 'extra' sweet or replace your last drink of the evening with a glass of milk.

By consuming your favourite festive treats in moderation you will help protect your teeth from decay.

4. Use a bottle opener

Teeth are not designed to open bottles, or packets of crisps or nuts. In addition, they shouldn't be used to tear off labels or cut tape when wrapping your presents.

So, always take a moment to find the bottle opener or scissors to prevent any damage to your teeth.

If you do chip, break or crack a tooth, contact your dentist to book an appointment to fill the tooth or smooth rough edges.

And, if you lose a tooth due to trauma, don't panic. Try and put it back in the socket without handling the root, keep it inside your cheek or place it in milk, and book in for an emergency dental appointment for prompt treatment.





5. Don't forget the cheeseboard

After all your festive feasting, save a little space for the cheeseboard.

Cheese is great for your teeth as it neutralises plaque acid, which helps prevent tooth decay.

Eating cheese increases the amount of saliva in the mouth, which is the body's natural way of maintaining a healthy pH level. Cheese also releases chemical compounds that can form a protective layer on teeth, which protects against plaque acids that attack teeth enamel.

How you can benefit from Elmsleigh House's support

Elmsleigh House Dental Clinic is a private dentists based in Farnham, Surrey, that has been delivering top-quality dental services for more than 30 years.

We are dedicated to keeping your teeth healthy and can connect you with the highest quality treatments, an exceptional range of services and a unique standard of professional care.

All of our dentists are highly qualified, our specialists have completed years of advanced training, and our dental implant team offer expertise in complex techniques. We are trusted by dentists from other practices who refer their patients to us for complex and specialist treatments such as dental implants, and we run courses to share knowledge with other dentists.

Rest assured that as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, our team are working with enhanced PPE (personal protective equipment), new sterilisation and fogging technology and an enhanced and stringent infection control policy in place to see patients safely.





Contact Elmsleigh House

Discover how you can benefit from our dental care and treatments
by contacting the Welcome Team:

01252 713797

info@elmsleighhouse.co.uk

www.elmsleighhouse.co.uk/contact-us

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