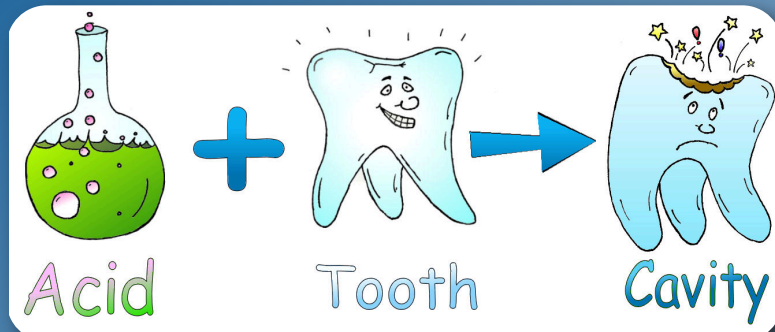


Tooth Decay: Bugs and Acids!

Tooth Decay and Acid Production

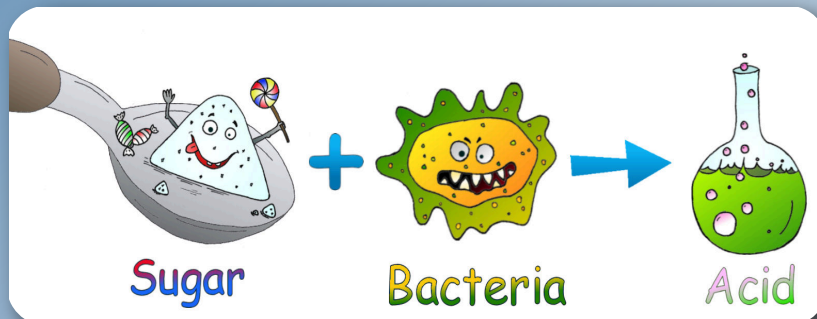
Most people think that sugary foods are the cause of tooth decay, but this is only part of the story!



Tooth decay is actually a result of acids. These acids dissolve the tooth **enamel** and cause **cavities!** But how do these acids get onto our teeth?

It Takes Sugar and Bacteria to Make Acid

When we eat or drink **sugary foods or beverages**, we aren't just feeding ourselves, we feed the tooth decay causing **bacteria** too!



These bacteria take the sugar and turn it into acids, and these acids then start to dissolve the tooth enamel! Sugar doesn't turn into tooth-harming acid without these bacteria, so we need to have these bacteria in our mouths for sugar to harm our teeth.

Enamel is the hard outer coating of your tooth. Its job is to protect the softer inner areas of your tooth. If a tooth's enamel dissolves away, the sensitive inner part of the tooth may be exposed, causing a toothache!

A cavity occurs when a tooth's enamel dissolves. This can cause brown spots on the teeth and pain. "Tooth Decay" is another phrase often used to mean the same thing as cavity.

Sugary foods include not only candy and pop, but many other foods as well. Juices, crackers or biscuits, and dried fruits often contain lots of sugar.

Bacteria are also commonly called "bugs" or "germs". They are much too small to be seen with the naked eye.