

HEALTHY YOU GUY KIDS

STAY-WELL NEWS FOR YOU AND EVERYONE YOU LOVE

What to eat for a healthy smile

YOGURT A major cause of bad breath, plaque, and gum disease is a buildup of bacteria. But research has found that 6 ounces of plain, sugar-free yogurt a day might help knock out germs between teeth. "The good bacteria in yogurt may help fight bad ones in your mouth," says Christine D. Wu, Ph.D., a professor of pediatric dentistry at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry. It even works for toothbrush-averse kids: Those who eat yogurt four or more times a week tend to get fewer cavities, according to one study. To sweeten the plain kind, stir in some honey, which also contains compounds that inhibit bacteria.

FISH Add a healthy mouth to the long list of reasons to get more seafood into your diet. Harvard scientists have linked the omega-3 fatty acids in fish with lower rates of gum disease. Their theory? Omega-3 fats may dial down

the inflammation (read: redness and swelling) that occurs when bacteria irritates gums.

FRUITS AND VEGGIES Fiber-rich apples, celery, and carrots stimulate saliva, which contains antimicrobials that fight bacteria, says Timothy Chase, a cosmetic dentist in New York City. Plus, chewing crunchy foods helps massage and improve circulation in your gums, Wu says. And grab an orange or a grapefruit: Other research suggests that vitamin C may help keep gums healthy.

CHEESE Like milk, cheese is a good source of calcium and vitamin D, nutrients important for building strong teeth. There's even evidence that munching on some cheddar, gouda, or mozzarella could help neutralize the acids that strip away tooth enamel, and that means pearlier whites. So yes, you'll have the cheese plate. -NICCI MICCO