

Why do sweets stick to your teeth?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Some sweets are simply stickier than others. A toffee, a chew or a gummy bear can leave a coating in the grooves of your back teeth that is still there long after the rest of the sweet has gone. There are two reasons they stick, and one very good reason to care.

Why chewy sweets cling

Soft, chewy sweets such as toffee, caramel, chews and gummies are pressed down into your teeth every time you bite. Your back teeth have grooves on their biting surfaces, and those grooves provide tiny hiding places where plaque bacteria collect.

Gummy bears and other gummy sweets are known to stick to teeth, and that can contribute to tooth decay: see [what is the difference between gummies and jellies?](#)

The bacteria make their own glue

The second reason is chemical. The bacteria most closely linked with tooth decay, *Streptococcus mutans*, attach themselves to the film of plaque on your teeth by turning sucrose, ordinary sugar, into an extremely sticky substance called dextran. So the sugar in sweets does not just feed the bacteria; it helps them hold on.

Why it matters

Tooth decay needs four things: a tooth, the right bacteria, sugars they can ferment, and time. The bacteria turn sugars into acid, mainly lactic acid, and that acid dissolves some of the minerals in the tooth surface. Saliva slowly brings the mouth back to normal, but the British Orthodontic Society warns that your teeth can be under attack from plaque acid for up to one hour after eating or drinking something sugary.

That is why frequency matters so much. Every sugary snack starts a new acid attack, and the development of tooth decay relies heavily on how often teeth are exposed to acid. A sweet that stays stuck in your teeth keeps its sugar there for longer.

How to enjoy sweets and keep your teeth

- **Keep sweets to mealtimes.** NHS dental advice is to keep sweet snacks and drinks to mealtimes, because decay is strongly linked to how often you eat sugar.
- **Do not graze.** Nibbling sweets all afternoon means repeated acid attacks.

- **Brush with fluoride toothpaste.** The British Orthodontic Society advises brushing for two minutes at least twice a day.
- **Think about sugar free.** Sugar alcohols, used in many sugar free sweets and gums, are not fed on by mouth bacteria, so they do not contribute to tooth decay: see [what are sugar free sweets made with?](#)

If you wear braces, sticky sweets are a problem in another way too: see [can you eat sweets with braces?](#)

We sell golden bears, toffee bonbons and chocolate toffee eclairs in our pick and mix, and they are best enjoyed after a meal.

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