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# WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT REMINERALIZING TEETH?

FOR DR. ROZE BIOHEALTH CLINICS | 08 September 2022

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Bacteria in your mouth can break down your teeth. Your body naturally tries to fix this with a process called remineralization.

## 1. What is tooth Remineralization?

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- Remineralization is a natural tooth repair process. Your body takes calcium and phosphate minerals from your saliva and deposits them in your enamel. Enamel is the protective outer layer of your teeth.
- Your teeth lose minerals in a process called demineralization, which happens as you eat and drink throughout the day. You are exposed to mouth bacteria throughout the day.
- Remineralization helps replace those lost minerals to keep your teeth strong and prevent tooth disease. The minerals work together to form a compound called hydroxyapatite, which is a building block of your teeth and provides strength.
- If you have more tooth demineralization (mineral loss) than remineralization (mineral gain), you'll get cavities. A cavity is a permanent hole in your enamel that your dentist has to fill.

## 2. What causes tooth demineralization?

Tooth demineralization happens naturally. It only becomes a problem when your body can't replace what you lose. Lots of factors affect demineralization, including mouth bacteria, mouth acid, and saliva.

- **Bacteria.** Your mouth is full of bacterias, including some that are helpful and some that cause tooth disease. They constantly create a sticky film on your teeth called plaque. This film is like a bubble where bacteria hang out, feed on sugar from your food and drinks, and make acids. These acids slowly break down the minerals and enamel of your teeth.
- Having too much sugary, starchy food and beverage causes bacteria to grow and can lead to tooth demineralization. Not brushing your teeth regularly can lead to more bacteria and plaque buildup and tooth disease.
- **Not enough saliva.** Your saliva is also important. It acts as a type of mouthwash that neutralizes acid and cleans your teeth. It also has mineral ions for rebuilding your enamel. If you don't have enough healthy saliva to get rid of acid and remineralize teeth, you're more likely to have tooth decay. Certain diseases and medications that cause dry mouth can lead to demineralization and tooth decay.
- **Mouth acid.** Since acid causes enamel breakdown and demineralization, eating acidic fruits and drinking acidic fruit juices, sodas, fizzy drinks, and coffee can also lead to problems. Some health conditions can also change the acid level in your mouth and cause problems, including:

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- Bulimia
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease, where stomach acid flushes up into your throat
- Mouth Breathing
- Snoring

#### 4. How to strengthen teeth

Good daily hygiene practices and regular dental appointments can help strengthen your teeth and prevent disease. These include:

- **Brushing and flossing twice a day**
- **Yearly cleanings and check-ups**
- **Getting fillings as needed**
- **Getting hydroxyapatite**

But there are other things you can do that can help remineralize and repair teeth. These include:

- **Xylitol.** Xylitol is a sweetener that works in two ways: it starves bacteria and disrupts growth and it increases saliva flow. Bacteria can't feed on xylitol. Less growth means less acid and plaque production. The extra saliva also helps neutralize your mouth acid and prevent plaque. You can take xylitol after eating and brushing your teeth, up to 3 times a day.

You can try xylitol products like:

- Candies
- Sugar-free chewing gum
- Mouth spray
- Crystals

- Hydroxyapatite toothpaste might also be helpful and repair teeth. One 2019 study tested fluoride toothpaste and 10% hydroxyapatite toothpaste on children. It found that hydroxyapatite toothpaste worked as well as fluoride in stopping mineral breakdown and preventing cavities. These are newer products though, so more studies are needed.

- **Diet changes.** A healthy diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins like fish, eggs, and beans is important for healthy teeth. Eat less sugary, starchy foods and drinks and limit snacking.

### 5. How Long Does It Take to Remineralize Teeth?

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Your teeth can remineralize if you make changes to your daily habits and diet. While the mineralization cycle happens all day long, it takes time to repair teeth. If your enamel is damaged, you'll need dental work to fix your teeth.

### 6. Signs of Tooth Remineralization

How do you know if what you're doing is working? Look for signs of tooth remineralization. These include:

- Less tooth sensitivity
- Smaller white spots
- Smoother teeth
- Healthier looking teeth

It's important to have regular dental check-ups. Your dentist can find and fix problems before they get too big and help you maintain a healthy mouth.



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