



Dental Health for College Students

Going to college? Congratulations! Here are some things to consider before you take the plunge. Because college schedules can be chaotic, and because of the demands of long hours studying, college students sometimes develop habits that are destructive to their teeth. We have seen patients that require fillings, extractions, and root canals after a year of college. Don't let this be you! Dental work can be expensive and requires a lifetime of upkeep. Here are some tips for avoiding dental problems while in college.

- **If it's sweet or acidic, it's bad for you** (unless it has artificial sweetener). The worst things are soda, Gatorade, coffee with sugar, fruit drinks, hard candies, breath mints, sticky candies, and sugar gum (although you can get diet or sugarless versions of all of these).
- **If it's bad for you, eat or drink it all at once, then rinse with water or brush your teeth.** Sipping three Cokes slowly between meals is much worse than drinking one with each meal. Use artificial sweetener in coffee if sipping it slowly.
- **Brush and floss every day.** If you don't floss, you could get cavities in between your teeth that don't show except on x-rays.
- **Use fluoride daily.** Toothpaste has fluoride in it, but not as much as fluoride mouthrinse or a prescription strength gel (ask us for a prescription). Scope, Listerine, etc do NOT have fluoride in them—it must say "fluoride anticavity mouthrinse" on the bottle. One brand is ACT, but generic brands work just as well.
- **See a dentist regularly.** If dental problems are caught early they are much less painful and expensive to deal with.

More questions? Visit us online at www.doctor-k.com. We are here to help.