



# 6 Habits That Harm Your Teeth

(And How to Break Them)





# NAIL BITING

**THE HABIT:** This nervous habit can **chip teeth** and impact your jaw. Placing your jaw for long periods of time in a protruding position can place pressure on it, which is associated with **jaw dysfunction**.

**THE SOLUTION:** Bitter-tasting nail polishes, stress reduction and setting small, realistic goals can help. If certain situations are triggers, hold something to keep your fingers busy. Do not put your fingers in your mouth, it can introduce bacteria & viruses.



# BRUSHING TOO HARD

**THE HABIT:** **Brushing** for two minutes twice a day is one of the best habits you can get into. Just make sure you're not trying too hard. Brushing with a hard toothbrush, or brushing too hard, can damage teeth and irritate gums.

**THE SOLUTION:** Use a soft toothbrush with the **CDA/ADA Seal of Acceptance** at the proper pressure. Don't think 'scrub.' Think 'massage'. Save the hard toothbrush for cleaning the grout in the bathroom tile.



# GRINDING AND CLENCHING

**THE HABIT:** This can cause chipping or cracking of the teeth, as well as muscle tenderness or joint pain. You might also feel like you can't open your mouth wide or chewing causes pain.

**THE SOLUTION:** Relaxation exercises, massage therapy and staying aware makes a difference. A nighttime nightguard can also help. You'll have less tooth damage, less pain and muscle soreness and better sleep.



# CHEWING ICE CUBES

**THE HABIT:** Tooth enamel is a crystal. Ice is a crystal. When you push two crystals against each other, one will break. Most of the time it's the ice, but sometimes the tooth or a filling will break.

**THE SOLUTION:** Drink chilled beverages without ice, or use a straw so you're not tempted.



# CONSTANT SNACKING

**THE HABIT:** Grazing all day, especially on sugary foods and drinks, puts you at a higher risk for cavities. When you eat, cavity-causing bacteria feast on leftover food, producing an acid that attacks the outer shell of your teeth.

**THE SOLUTION:** Eat balanced meals to feel fuller, longer. If you need a snack, make sure it's low in sugar. Choose cheese as a neutralizing snack.



# USING YOUR TEETH AS TOOLS

**THE HABIT:** Your teeth were made for eating, not to stand in as a pair of scissors or hold things when your hands are full. When you do this, you put yourself at a higher risk of cracking your teeth, injuring your jaw or accidentally swallowing something you shouldn't.

**THE SOLUTION:** Stop and find something or someone to give you a hand. Your mouth will thank you.