

# The Deskside Dental Dangers That Can Ruin Your Smile

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Turns out, desk jobs aren't just detrimental to your posture (hello, bad back) or your waistline (a sedentary job never did anyone much good), but they're also not great for your teeth. We'd imagine that our oft-neglected gnashers would take the hit of our tea and coffee addictions, but there are other casualties of the 9-5 lifestyle. A new report by leading dental and orthodontic practice [elleven](#) outlines just how many dental dangers there are in many of our favourite quick-fix snacks - and no, it's not just your furtive 4pm biscuit that's setting you back.

Dr Sameer Patel from [elleven](#) warned that our mishaps can begin as early as breakfast, with some cereals having more sugar than chocolate biscuits. A normal serving of some cereals can contain as much sugar as two and a half biscuits, and even seemingly healthy cereals like muesli can be full of the sweet stuff. Patel blames this on inconsistent labelling, and advises unsweetened porridge or wheat biscuits and sweeten with crunchy fruit or honey if you must, noting that dairy can help counteract the damage by sugar, so no need to scrimp on the milk. Probiotic yoghurt can also help decrease bad bacteria in the mouth which in turn limits tooth decay and helps to promote a healthy mouth environment.

Then, coffee and tea are notorious for staining teeth and if drunk regularly, the staining, tannin compounds can build up and cause teeth to turn yellow. Regular consumption can also lead to bad breath, which is down to your mouth dehydrating. Caffeine dries out the mouth, counteracting the internal rinsing that normally occurs and causes bacteria to multiply, so follow Patel's advice and rinse your mouth with water after your latte, or opt for green tea which contains bacteria-slowing polyphenols and can even help clean plaque from the teeth.

When lunch rolls around, beware the ready-made sandwich. A lot of sandwiches have added sugar to enhance flavour, and white bread which contributes to dental decay, because it's made up of simple sugars that dissolve quickly. When consumed, a surge of acid takes place inside the mouth and over long periods this acid can erode tooth enamel. Patel's advice is to choose whole grains that are also rich in teeth-strengthening vitamins and minerals. Adding a cheese or chicken filling is recommended as these calcium and phosphorus rich foods are thought to protect and strengthen teeth.

As for snacks, juicing's not as saintly as you might think. Your body can't tell the difference between the so-called 'healthy' sugars in fruit, so eating or drinking a high-fruit content juice will still cause a spike of sugar in your body. Juices also have a high acid content not dissimilar to fizzy drinks, so eat fruit in moderation, and opt for crunchy fruits like apples and pears. The water content in these helps dilute the sugars they contain. Finally, Patel warns against snacking on popcorn as it creates lactic acid in your mouth, an offender when it comes to eroding tooth enamel, and the unpopped kernels are notorious for cracking teeth and damaging fillings.