
The story...

Unknown bad habit causes tooth decay

Learn language related to...

Tooth decay

Need-to-know language

eats away – gradually damages or destroys

chip – break off a small piece

swishing – causing a liquid to flow through or around something to clean it

acidic – containing acid: a liquid that dissolves materials

erode – gradually damage or reduce the strength of something

Answer this...

What does Rachel do that causes damage to her teeth?

Watch the video online:

<http://www.live.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/lingohack/ep-180411>

Transcript

Back in the dentist's chair, even though she thought she looked after her teeth well. Rachel Coe-O'Brien has erosive tooth wear. It's when acid **eats away** at them until they **chip** or get shorter. It turns out Rachel had a bad habit she didn't even know about.

Rachel Coe-O'Brien

When I drink normally, especially if it's a kind of flavoured drink, I would just hold it in my mouth for a bit longer than I suppose the average person. I think it might be the taste or something like that. And I think, again, that kind of... more exposure to my teeth and it sits in my mouth longer than just swallowing it down.

As vices go, it doesn't sound so terrible. But researchers say it's bad news for your teeth.

Saiorse O'Toole, dentist

We found that about maybe one in six people had habits like sipping things really slowly or **swishing** them round their mouth - people tend to rinse things round their mouth. If you're doing these behaviours on a daily basis for years and years and years, you can cause serious damage to your teeth. And that serious damage can mean that your whole mouth needs to be rebuilt.

It is preventable - mostly by cutting back on **acidic** food and drinks. Some things though, like fruit - are generally seen as the healthy option. But from the dental point of view, they can **erode** teeth.

So should people scrap their five-a-day to protect their teeth? The researchers say that's the last thing they want. But the advice is to be aware of overall eating patterns, and to consider snacks that are less acidic and higher in calcium.

Did you get it?

What does Rachel do that causes damage to her teeth?

The answer:

Rachel holds the drink in her mouth longer than the average person, which exposes her teeth to the liquid for more time.

Did you know?

Humans have two sets of teeth. The first set of 20, which are informally referred to as 'milk teeth', are lost in childhood. The adult set has 32 and consists of four incisors, two canines, four premolars and six molars in each jaw.