

## Oral Acid Reduction Protocol for patients at Special Care Dentistry, Loma Linda University School of Dentistry

In many cases, extensive tooth decay can be caused by an acidic environment in the mouth. If your dentist has decided that this may be a reason for your child's tooth decay (cavities), there are some things you can do to reduce the acid of the mouth, and this may help reduce tooth cavities. This is an important concept, because the acidity in your mouth lets the bacteria grow faster and destroy your teeth faster. This can work for all members of your family.

The following instructions will help in changing the acidity of the mouth:

- Limit or remove the amount of acidic drinks such as juices and sodas. Soda is extremely damaging and should not be given to children at all.
- Make sure your child is eating a balanced diet, with enough protein (eggs, meat, cheese, peanut butter...), and limiting the amount of simple carbohydrates (sweet cereal, donuts . . .). Snacks like nuts, yogurt, and cheese all help prevent cavities. Avoid sugary or sticky snacks.
- Brush at least twice a day, to remove the bacteria that cause cavities. You should be brushing your child's teeth for them until they are able to do a good job by themselves, which is usually around age 7 or 8. It should take at least 2 minutes to brush their teeth each time. Have your older children set a timer to help them know when they have reached 2 minutes. Younger children can be laid with their heads flat (lap, bed ...) so you can see better when you brush and floss their teeth. Flossing should be done every day and you will need to help your child with this also.
- Dip your child's toothbrush in small amount of dry baking soda once a day for brushing, or using toothpaste with baking soda in it. The baking soda "shocks" the acidic environment causing the acidity to be reduced.
- If recommended, after the final tooth brushing session in the evening, place a small amount of MI Paste on your finger and spread it over all your child's teeth. This should be done right before bedtime, and make sure your child doesn't eat, drink or rinse after placing the paste. It is ok if your child ingests this small amount of paste. The MI Paste helps to make the enamel of the tooth stronger as well as reducing the acid environment of the mouth. This can only be bought at dental offices.

These tips should help keep your child's mouth healthy and reduce the amount of cavities in the future.