

# Guide to dental care during Christmas

ELMSLEIGH HOUSE

— DENTAL CLINIC —







From mince pies and chocolate, to your favourite festive tipple, the Christmas period brings many delicious treats.

But what impact does it have on your teeth, and how can you manage it?

Our guide tells you everything you need to know to keep your teeth healthy.

### **In this guide you'll learn:**

- Statistics and trends around our sugar intake during Christmas
- How sugar intake impacts dental health
- Tips to avoid tooth decay over the festive season
- How Elmsleigh House can help





## Section 1 – Statistics and facts about sugar intake

### Statistics and facts - What you need to know about Christmas sugar intake

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Government figures have shown that since the UK sugar tax on soft drinks came into force in April 2018, it has raised £153.8 million as of October 2018.

And, that figure is expected to rise to £240 million for the full year.

This comes as no surprise when we consider the increase of sugar intake, and the variety of treats available during the Christmas period.



# Christmas sugar statistics and facts:

## Drinks...

- Mulled wine has three and a half spoonfuls of sugar per glass
- Egg Nog has 6.6g of sugar per glass
- Cafe Nero's Christmas medium Belgian truffle hot chocolate contains 56.9g of sugar
- Pret A Manger's medium orange hot chocolate contains 50.5g of sugar
- Costa's medium caramelised orange hot chocolate contains 45.1g of sugar
- Starbucks' tall salted caramel brownie hot chocolate contains 38.3g of sugar

## Food...

- Pre-made jars of cranberry sauce contain 4.1g per teaspoon
- Shop-bought stuffing can contain 4.1g of sugar per slice
- Honey-glazed parsnips have a fifth of your daily sugar intake per 100g serving
- Christmas pudding can have 21g of sugar per portion
- Mince pies can have 23g of sugar
- Christmas cake can have 37g of sugar per slice







## Section 2 – How sugar intake impacts dental health

# How Christmas indulgence can impact your dental health

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## Sticky foods

Food covered in sticky substances such as caramel can be incredibly damaging for teeth.

Caramel is liquified sugar that hardens into a sticky goo that sticks to your teeth and can lead to tooth decay.

The bacteria that lives in our mouths feed off the sticky residue, and produce acid that wears away tooth enamel.

## Hard candy

Hard candies - such as Christmas candy canes - can last a long time, which is why children like them so much.

However, sucking on hard candy for long periods of time creates a “sugar bath” and produces acid that causes cavities.



## Christmas drinks

From hot chocolate to egg nog, temptation is at every corner during the festive season, and they are full of sugar, which can increase the likelihood of tooth decay.

In addition, our alcohol consumption may increase, with work parties and festive gatherings.

Alcohol can dehydrate the cell walls in your mouth. This may permeate the tissue more easily, increase your risk of oral cancer, and increase risks around gum disease, which can destroy gum tissue and bone, and can lead to tooth loss and gum infections.







## 1. Brush after sticky food

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Foods such as Christmas cake, pudding and mince pies are laden with dried fruit, which is high in sugar and can stick to your teeth.

And, you may find yourself indulging in boxes of chocolates and sticky toffees, putting your teeth under constant attack.

It's essential to pay extra attention when brushing your teeth over the festive season. And parents should check their children are brushing away all sticky food from their teeth, especially before bedtime.



## 2. Clean your teeth well

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You should brush your teeth at least twice a day, no matter what time you go to bed on Christmas Eve or rise on Christmas Day.

We'd recommend spending a minimum of two minutes brushing, using toothpaste containing at least 1450ppm fluoride, as this helps protect teeth from cavities.

However, you must spit the remaining fluid out, and not rinse your teeth when you've finished brushing, to avoid washing the protective fluoride away.

And, it's good to use interdental brushes or dental floss to remove sticky plaque from between your teeth. It's important to supervise children's brushing, and to remind family members of all ages to brush their teeth thoroughly before they go to bed.







### 3. Eat and drink in moderation

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Christmas is a time to enjoy festive food and drink, but ensure you're mindful of the effects constant feasting will have on your teeth.

It's not always the amount of sugar in your food and drink, but how often these are consumed.

We recommend keeping any sweet treats to mealtimes only, to avoid constant snacking, and to brush your teeth well afterwards.

And, consider passing on that "extra" sweet, or replace your last drink of the evening with a glass of milk. By consuming your favourite festive treats in moderation you'll help protect your teeth from decay.



## 4. Use a bottle opener

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Teeth are not designed to open bottles, or packets of crisps or nuts. In addition, they shouldn't be used to tear off labels or cut tape when wrapping your presents.

So, always take a moment to find the bottle opener or scissors to prevent any damage to your teeth.

If you do chip, break or crack a tooth, contact your dentist to book an appointment to fill the tooth or smooth rough edges.

And, if you lose a tooth due to trauma, don't panic. Try and put it back in the socket without handling the root, keep it inside your cheek or place it in milk, and book in for an emergency dental appointment for prompt treatment.







## 5. Don't forget the cheeseboard

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After all your festive feasting, save a little space for the cheeseboard.

Cheese is great for your teeth as it neutralises plaque acid, which helps prevent tooth decay.

Eating cheese increases the amount of saliva in the mouth, which is the body's natural way of maintaining a healthy pH level. And, cheese releases chemical compounds that can form a protective layer on teeth, which protects against acids that attack teeth enamel.



## How you can benefit from Elmsleigh House's support

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Elmsleigh House Dental Clinic is a private dental practice based in Farnham, Surrey, that has been delivering top-quality dental services for more than 30 years.

We're dedicated to keeping your teeth healthy for life, and can connect you with the highest quality treatments, an exceptional range of services, and a unique standard of professional care.

Trusted by private patients and referring dentists for specialist and complex treatments, we're one of the UK's most technically advanced centres offering clinical excellence from dentists, surgeons, hygienists and technicians at the top of their profession.

And, we use the best and most up-to-date equipment and materials, to provide you with preventative, long-term care to keep your teeth and gums in excellent condition.







Contact our team today

Discover how you can benefit from Elmsleigh House's support by  
booking your appointment today by contacting:

**01252 713797**

**info@elmsleighhouse.co.uk**

**www.elmsleighhouse.co.uk/contact-us**

Please note, we will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, but for emergency appointments you can ring the clinic number and you'll be directed to our dentist on call who will give you advice and emergency treatment, if needed (emergency fees apply)

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