



PRESS RELEASE

Patients Ask the Sacramento Dentistry Group How Acidic is My Drink?

Sugar is well known as a contributor to tooth decay. This is chiefly because it feeds the oral bacteria that break down tooth enamel. Acidic beverages also contribute to tooth decay, simply because their high acid content also erodes a tooth's outer layer. So how acidic is too acidic and is it just sodas that present this dilemma? The Sacramento Dentistry Group alerts its patients to this issue and now presents the pH level of many common beverage groups.

What Does pH Measure?

Whether a substance is acidic or basic is determined by where it falls on the pH scale. The abbreviation comes from the German word *potenz*, meaning "power," combined with the international chemical symbol for hydrogen, an "H", thus *pH*. Liquids that are more acidic are low on the pH scale, and that means they have far more free hydrogen ions in the solution than a neutral substance like plain water. Those extra ions make acidic substances very reactive and that's one reason why they have considerable erosion power.

The pH of Many Drinks

The [Journal of the American Dental Association](#) presented a study conducted by the [University of Alabama at Birmingham](#) that measured the pH of common drinks found in local stores. What they revealed should give many people pause regarding their drinking habits. While natural beverages like fruit juice may have various nutritional benefits, it is worth noting that they are just as acidic as many of the most common types of sodas. Erosive drinks have a pH of 2 to 4; mildly erosive drinks are pH 4 to 5.

Drink	pH
Pure Lemon Juice	2.2
Water	7.2 (varies by location)
Sport Drinks	2.77-3.65
Fruit Juices	2.56 (Cranberry) to 4.19 (V8)
Soda	2.32 (RC Cola) to 4.57 (A&W Diet Root Beer)
Energy Drinks	2.47 (Jolt Cola) to 3.64 (Nitrous Monster)
Sweet Teas	2.85 (Arizona) to 5.18

Certain patterns readily emerge. All sodas, except root beer, are considered erosive, primarily due to acids added for flavoring. Sweet teas likewise typically have added lemon or citric acid, severely dropping their pH compared to normal tea or coffee, which is typically not considered erosive. And juices, much promoted by many nutritionists, are fine with meals, but not an ideal hydration beverage, as they are often just as erosive as soda or sport drinks.

Consuming water along with these beverages helps to control their erosional power. At a minimum, rinsing the mouth with water immediately after drinking them limits the damage they can do. Never brush the teeth immediately after drinking an acidic beverage, as the toothbrush bristles will etch the teeth, thanks to the acid remaining in the mouth. Drinking with a straw also helps to carry the acidic fluids beyond the teeth and straight to the esophagus, limiting exposure to the enamel. For more tips on avoiding tooth decay, readers can visit the Sacramento Dentistry Group website at sacramentodentistry.com. Those who believe they are suffering from tooth decay should see a dentist immediately to repair any damage, no matter what the cause.