



Colds, Coughs...and Cavities?

You're probably aware that candy leads to cavities and sugary drinks can also cause decay. But cough syrup? Unfortunately, it's true—certain syrupy medications can cause tooth troubles, especially if they're consistently taken over a long period of time.

The antihistamine syrups you can buy over-the-counter to help you and your kids combat the flu or allergies often have high acidity and low pH levels. These medications can also contain sugar to help with the taste. Combined, those factors are like a one-two punch for teeth, working together to dissolve tooth enamel and cause erosion.

Don't worry—we're not suggesting you suffer through seasonal ailments without any relief. Just follow these four tips to make sure the medicine doesn't do more harm than good.

- Avoid taking syrup medications right before bed. Since saliva flow naturally decreases at night, the residue won't rinse away like it would during the day.
- If there's no way around a bedtime dose, make sure to rinse with water afterward.
- Try to take medications with meals. Chewing increases saliva flow, which helps wash away sugars and acids.
- Talk to your child's dentist about a topical fluoride, which helps keep decay at bay.

With the proper precautions and good oral health habits, you'll be able to keep colds, coughs, and cavities away this season!