



DON'T RUSH TO BRUSH

EDITOR'S CORNER

By Neil McLeod, BDS, LDS, RCS, DDS

The advantage of being editor of a professional newsletter with a friendly supportive staff is that one's pet peeves can get an airing. It has been fun to define "Doctor", to express the benefits of the old and the new in dental ideas, to focus on what it takes to upgrade our practices, and to consider our susceptibility to give in to market pressures to adopt "technology" that may not ultimately be efficacious. In my last editorial, we considered the possible detriments and benefits of the digital revolution and how it impacts dental practice.

While on my high horse, I thought it would be valuable to look backwards and consider that old maxim "*brush after meals*." It turns out that we should not "*rush to brush*." Recent research from the University of Adelaide in South Australia¹ on tooth erosion shows that the old advice to "brush your teeth right after a meal" is not correct after all. In fact, we should educate our patients to wait to brush for at least one and a half to two hours after eating because exposure to acidic foods and drinks etches our teeth.

Immediately after biting into fruit you notice that the teeth feel rough. What is that roughness? The answer is, it is the exposed protein matrix that supports the crystals of the enamel sticking out from the etched surface of the outer part of the tooth that makes it feel rough. Two hours later how does it feel? Smooth. The saliva in your mouth is a super saturated solution of calcium salts. It actually reconstitutes the external layer of the tooth. If you eat something that's acidic and you immediately go and brush your teeth you damage the protein matrix and eliminate the reconstitution or recrystallization of the outermost part of the tooth. If you brush vigorously immediately after every meal, slowly but surely, you'll be damaging your teeth.² ■

¹<http://www.washingtonsblog.com/2014/01/dont-brush-eating-acidic-food.html>

²<http://smallbiztrends.com/beverly-hills-dentist-dr-neil-mcleod-says-to-preserve-tooth-enamel-dont-rush-to-brush/>

³http://www.amazon.com/Dental-Ditties-Neil-Stewart-McLeod/dp/1517252504/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1449599915&sr=8-1&keywords=Neil+Stewart+McLeod+Poetry

DON'T RUSH TO BRUSH³

Have you ever bitten into a lemon
And noticed how rough each tooth
grows?
Well, they have been etched
And their protein matrix,
Where enamel's dissolved, is exposed.

But check your teeth two hours later
The feeling of roughness is gone,
Your saliva you see
Quite miraculously
Grows the crystals back all on its own.

A lot of our foods are acidic,
We like that it gives them a "bite",
But the protein's exposed
On which enamel grows,
And brushing that off isn't right.

So don't rush to brush after eating.
If you must brush then do it before,
They've been teaching us wrong
For ever so long,
And we shouldn't do that anymore.

We used to say brush after eating,
Which would ruin the lingering flavor
The reason they grieve,
Was the food that you leave?
On your teeth does the germs a big
favor.

Enjoy your food while you can taste it,
Take time to relax when you're done.
Don't rush to brush
And make all that fuss,
It isn't right and it's not fun.

