

IS THE LEMON WATER TREND RUINING YOUR TEETH?



Health enthusiasts and celebrities all reportedly love lemon water in its various forms – hot, cold and lukewarm – which is part of the reason why it has been labelled the must have drink to kickstart your morning.

Some say drinking lemon water promotes digestion, balances the body's pH levels and detoxifies from the inside out. While others claim it brightens the skin as well as bolstering the immune system. With so many potential health benefits, most assume the beverage must have the same positive impact on our teeth. But is this actually the case?

It is in fact true that the citrus acid within lemons can have a significant damaging effect on our teeth. The citric acid can wear away the enamel and allow other acids and sugars access to the tooth underneath. This can lead to cavities over time.

If you regularly drink lemon water, it's important to look out for signs of erosion. These signs include:

- **TOOTH SENSITIVITY:** Without the enamel to protect them, your teeth can become more sensitive to sugars or hot and cold foods.
- **TRANSPARENT EDGES:** Teeth with transparent edges are indicative of enamel erosion.
- **DISCOLOURATION:** You may also experience tooth discolouration if your enamel erodes. Without the enamel to protect the tooth, the dentin substance underneath is shown more clearly.

However, as with most health trends moderation is key. As long as you aren't drinking lemon water all day, every day, it can be good for you. Lemons, like many other fruits, are a great source of vitamin C. Therefore, drinking just one cup of warm lemon-enhanced water in the morning is unlikely to lead to tooth decay, cavities or erosion of the enamel.

Here's how you can protect your teeth while still enjoying the occasional lemon water:

1. Do not brush your teeth immediately after drinking lemon water. This can wear away the enamel even more as the citric acid is still fresh on your teeth.
2. Instead wait at least 30-40 minutes and rinse your mouth with regular water before grabbing your toothbrush.
3. Or, brush your teeth before drinking lemon water. Then don't brush again for a few hours to allow the calcium in your saliva to begin to remineralise your tooth enamel.
4. Drinking a lot of lemon water can weaken tooth enamel and irritate the gums. Try using a straw to limit its impact on both your teeth and gums.
5. Try lemon essential oil instead. It has all the same benefits, but the oil is made from the lemon peel not the fruit. This makes it healthier for your teeth.
6. If you prefer fresh lemon, squeeze no more than half of a lemon into an 8 oz cup of water.
7. Always rinse your mouth with regular water after drinking lemon water. It helps to neutralise the acidity in your mouth.