

How to prevent 'wine teeth' this holiday

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Why do some people's teeth stain after drinking red wine, and how can you prevent it during the holidays?

The answer is the relationship between the nature of [wine](#) and your tooth [enamel](#), says Uchenna Akosa, a dentist who heads Rutgers Health University Dental Associates in New Brunswick, the faculty practice of Rutgers School of Dental Medicine.

"When you drink red wine, you're encountering a triple threat to your

[teeth](#)'s whiteness: anthocyanins, which are the pigments in grapes that give red wine its rich color; tannins, which help bind the pigment to your teeth; and the acidity found in wine, which etches your enamel, making it more porous and it easier for the stain to stick. The strength of your enamel and how prone you are to plaque build-up is key to how much your teeth might stain," she said.

Here are Akosa's tips for preventing wine teeth:

- Brush before, but not immediately after, drinking: Since plaque can make it look like your teeth are stained, you should brush your teeth 30 minutes before drinking, but not right after since toothpaste can cause more etching.
- Don't drink white wine before red wine: The extra acid in the white wine will exacerbate the staining.
- Drink water while drinking wine: Swishing your mouth with water, which is neither basic or acidic, after [drinking](#) wine helps to reduce the wine's acidity and stimulates saliva flow, which is critical in fighting harmful bacteria and maintaining the ideal pH in your mouth. Chewing food is equally important because it also stimulates saliva. Cheese is ideal to pair with wine as it both stimulates saliva and reduces the acidity from the wine.
- Get regular dental cleanings to keep your enamel strong: Cleanings can help remove plaque, which is an acidic substance that damages your [tooth enamel](#). If not cleaned, it can result in cavities.

Provided by Rutgers University

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