

Turning to wine during lockdown? Here's how to protect your teeth

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(HealthDay)—Weathering the coronavirus pandemic might include

imbibing a few glasses of red wine on occasion, but one expert says you don't have to wind up with stained teeth because of it.

"The strength of your enamel and how prone you are to [plaque buildup](#) is key to how much your [teeth](#) might stain," said Dr. Uchenna Akosa, head of Rutgers Health University Dental Associates, the faculty practice of Rutgers School of Dental Medicine in New Brunswick, N.J.

Akosa called red wine a "triple threat" to a sparkling smile.

"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," she explained in a Rutgers news release.

Akosa offered these tips for preventing red wine stains:

- **Know when to brush.** Plaque can make it appear that your teeth are stained, so you should brush your teeth 30 minutes before drinking red wine—but not right after, since toothpaste can cause more etching.
- **Avoid mixing wines.** Don't drink [white wine](#) before [red wine](#), because the extra acid in the white wine will worsen the staining.
- **Have some water.** Swishing water in your mouth after drinking wine helps reduce the wine's acidity and stimulates saliva flow, which combats harmful bacteria.
- **Chew your food.** Chewing also stimulates saliva. Cheese is a perfect partner to wine because it stimulates saliva and reduces the acidity from the wine, Akosa said.
- **Get regular dental cleanings.** Cleanings help remove plaque, an

acidic substance that damages your [tooth enamel](#). Without regular cleanings, cavities can result.

More information: The Mayo Clinic has more on [taking care of your oral health](#).

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