

Don't let your teeth wear away

BY PROFESSOR ANDREW EDER

EVEN "HEALTHY" food and beverages, such as yoghurt, honey and fruit juice, as well as energy and diet fizzy drinks, nutritional supplements and some medicines, can damage teeth by wearing away their outer enamel.

At a recent meeting of Europe-wide dental experts, "erosive tooth wear" was declared a dental health problem that must be addressed without delay. Tooth wear may result in short, unattractive, rough or sensitive teeth. If wear is

Professor Andrew Eder: 'limit acidic food'



ignored, teeth may later require extensive restoration. But there are simple steps you can take which, while they won't reverse damage, can prevent worsening.

- Limit fruits, fruit juices, sparkling drinks, alcohol and other acids.
- Drink still water or low-fat milk between meals; restrict acidic foods and drinks to meal times.
- Use a wide-bore straw for acidic drinks; don't hold or swish them around the mouth.

● After acidic

foods or drinks, wait an hour before brushing teeth.

- Choose a toothbrush that has a small head and is relatively soft.
- Use a non-abrasive toothpaste that contains at least 1,400ppm fluoride.
- To neutralise acids in the mouth chew sugar-free gum or rinse with water or fluoridated mouthwash.
- If you chew any tablets, ask your doctor if they would be equally effective if swallowed whole with water.
- Obviously, never stop or change prescribed medicine without your doctor's advice.

Professor Andrew Eder is a consultant at the UCL Eastman Dental Institute and a specialist in restorative dentistry and prosthodontics. He leads a team at the London Tooth Wear Centre. See toothwear.co.uk (020 7486 7180) or ask your dentist for a referral