And Why Do I Still Get Cavities? I Brush my teeth and try not to eat candy…….

A specific bacteria, Strep Mutans, needs to be fairly predominant in your plaque for weakening of your enamel to occur. This specific bacteria uses the sugars in our diet to produce acid in our saliva. You are not born with this bacteria. It is acquired from your environment. Mechanical removal of your plaque is very helpful but is not the only solution. What else can I do?

- Switch to an electric toothbrush will allow you to remove more plaque, more efficiently.
- Use something to clean in between your teeth – i.e. floss, softpicks, proxabrushes, water pick.
- When you are not able to brush/floss, swish with water (ideally tap water).
- Increase exposure to topical fluoride which creates a more resistant barrier to the acidity in your saliva and plaque. Fluoride actually bonds to the molecular structure of your teeth.
- Reduce exposure to processed sugars in foods and beverages. Read labels, looking for ingredients like corn syrup, honey, brown sugar, dextrose. Read the grams of sugar. For each teaspoon of sugar or sugar products you consume, 20 minutes of acid production can occur.
- Reduce exposure to acidic foods and beverages i.e. carbonated beverages. The phosphoric acid and citric acid in beverages can be extremely harmful to our teeth**. Any food bottled or canned usually has citric acid added to it and has a pH of 4.5 or lower!**
- **The pH of our saliva is critical to maintaining healthy teeth. When the pH of our saliva consistently drops below 5.5, loss of minerals – calcium and phosphate – occur. This is called demineralization.** When remineralization does not occur, another specific bacteria, lactus bacillus, causes breakdown of the enamel structure resulting in a cavity. Before this point, YOU CAN REVERSE THE CAVITY PROCESS.
- Use xylitol products (xylitol must be the only sweetener in the product for it to be therapeutic) 4 to 6 times a day i.e xylitol toothpaste, mouthrinse, gum, mints, powdered form in coffee, cereal.