

# The truth about your favorite drinks

When thinking about drinks, the biggest factors for how they might affect our teeth include: acidity, sugar content, carbonation, and color

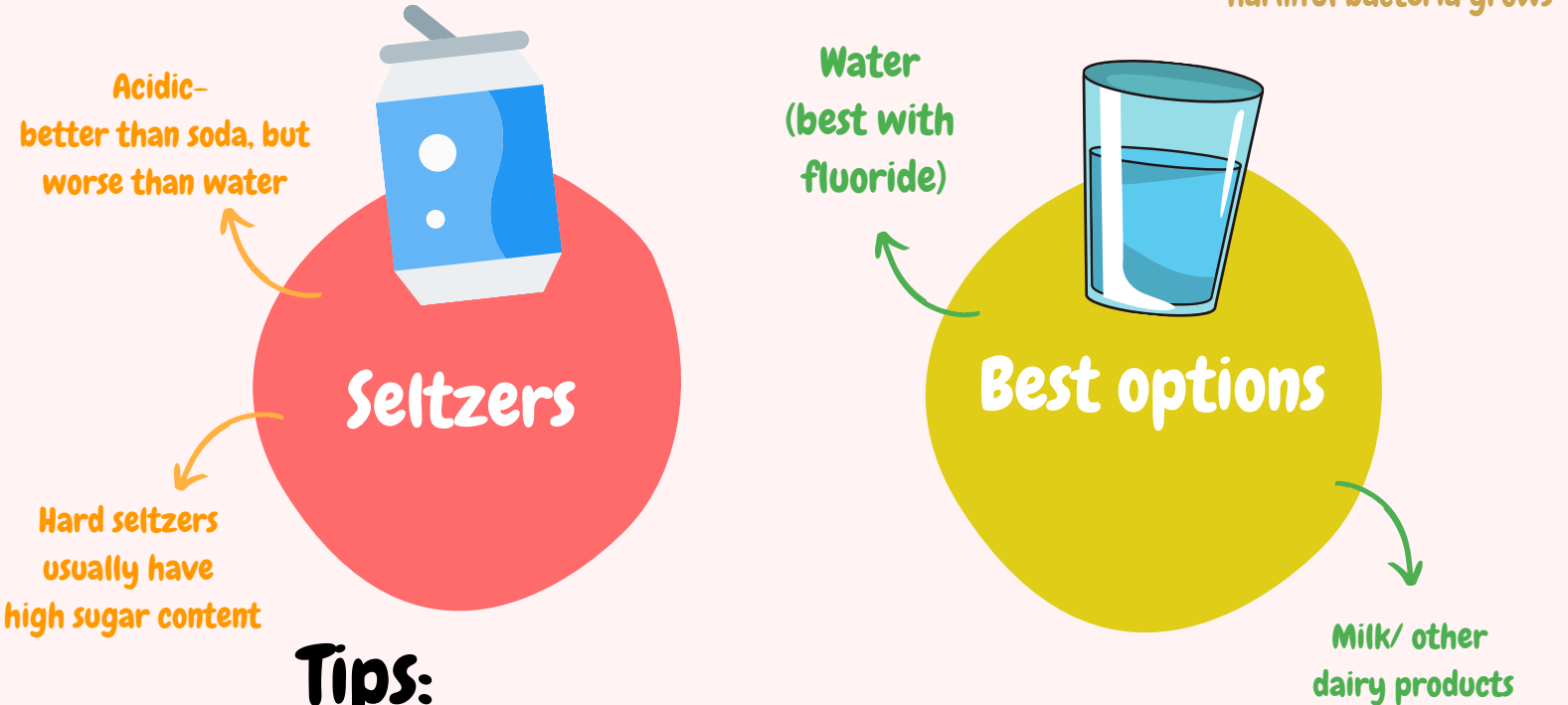
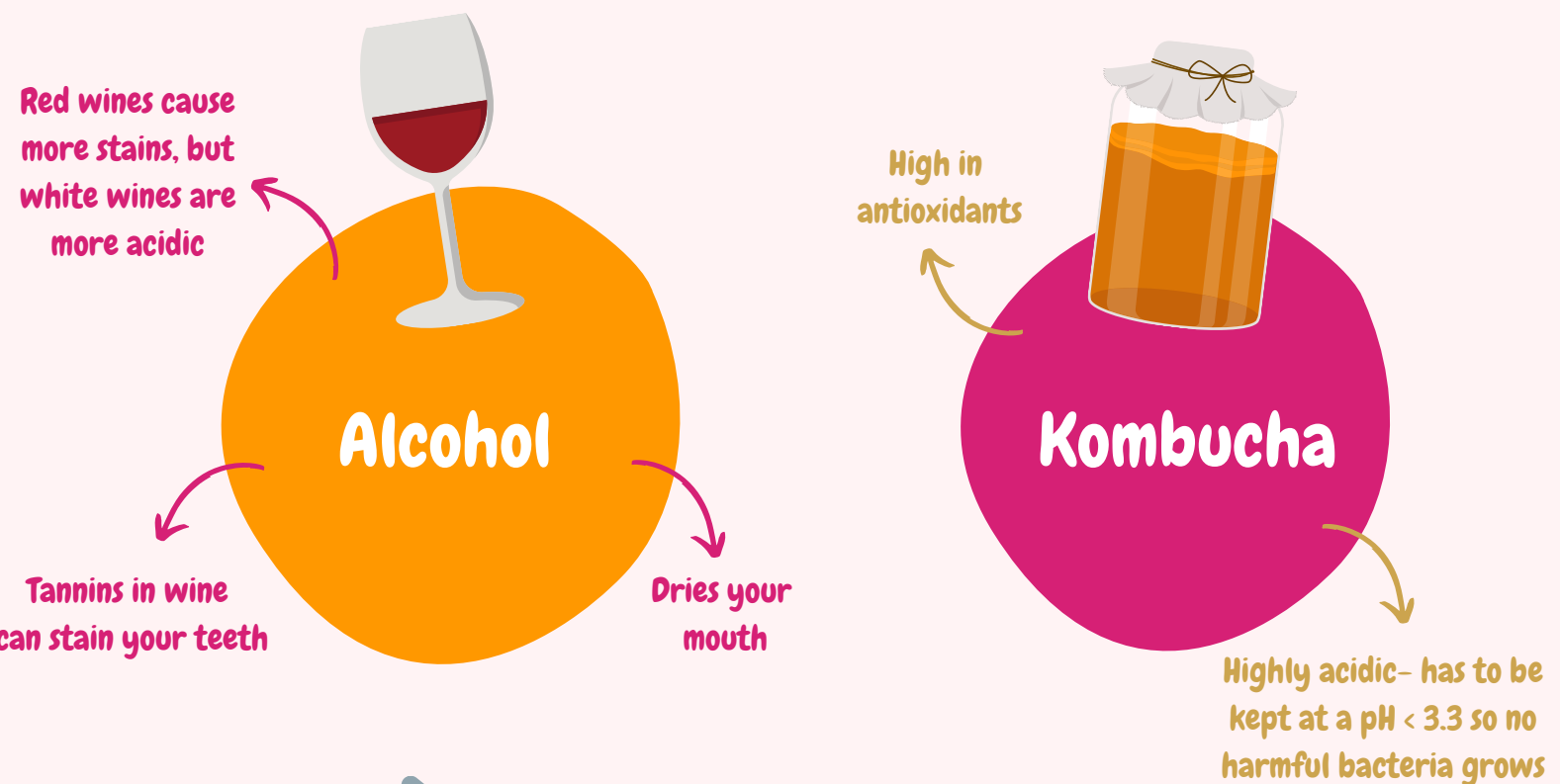
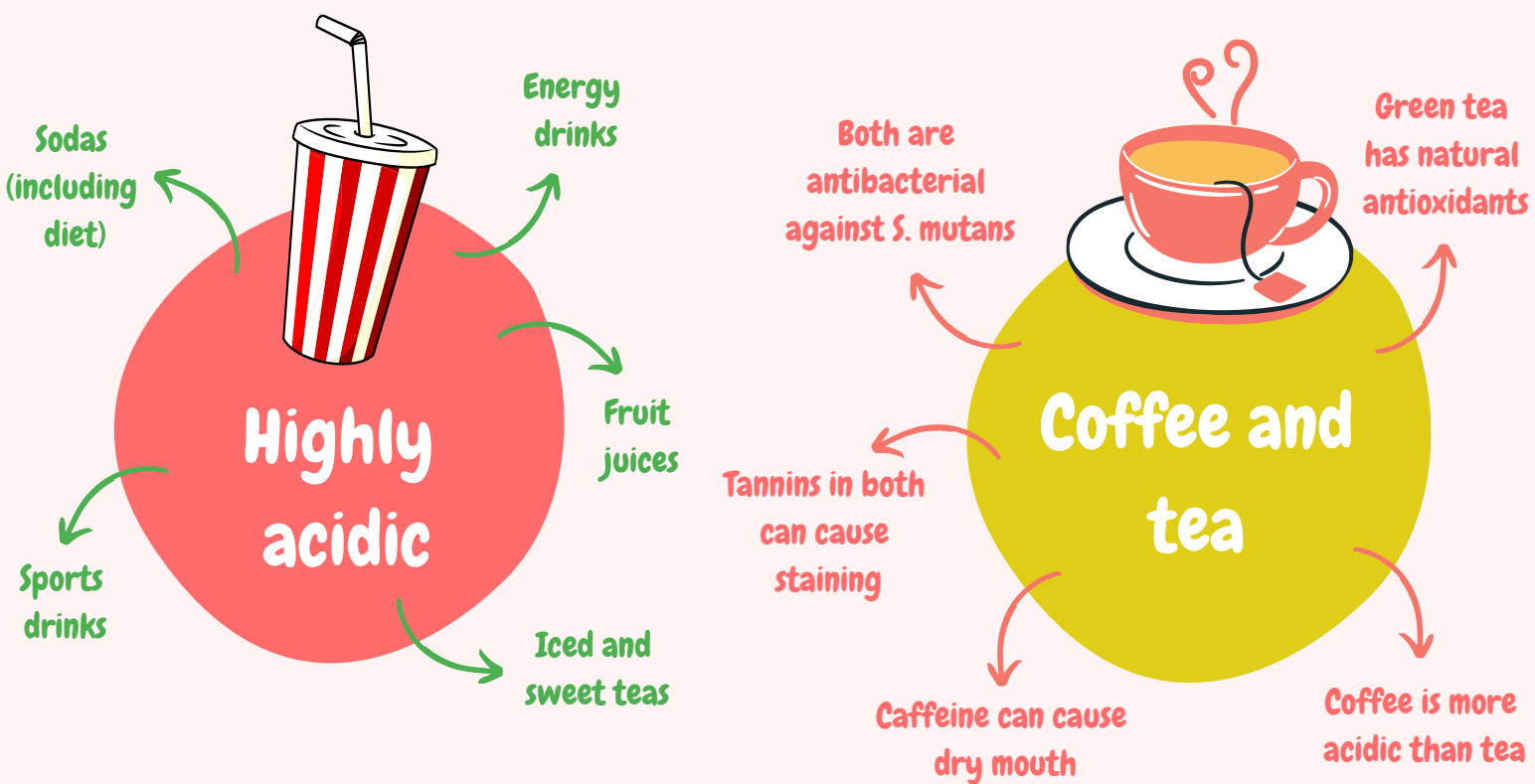
- **Acidity:** Drinks with a pH < 5.5 are considered to be acidic, and the lower their pH, the worse for your teeth.
  - It takes about 20 mins for our mouths to return to a more neutral pH after exposure to acidity (Remember the Stephan Curve!)
- **Sugars:** Can lead to tooth decay and gum disease.
- **Carbonation:** The CO<sub>2</sub> pumped into a drink turns into carbonic acid, which causes the pH to drop
- **Color:** The darker the color, the more likely to stain your teeth

## How Low Can You Go?

Beverages with a pH of 4 or less are acidic enough to erode tooth enamel if you drink them without food. Here's the pH of a sampling of drinks that researchers have tested.

Beverage	pH
Tap water	6.5–8.5
Milk	6.6–6.8
Perrier Sparkling Mineral Water	5.3
Canada Dry Club Soda	5.2
Starbucks Medium Roast Coffee	5.1
Unsweetened black tea	4.9
Beer (ale or lager)	3.8–4.2
Sparkling water	3.0–4.0
Wine (red or white)	2.9–3.9
Tropicana Orange Juice	3.8
Tropicana Apple Juice	3.5
Mountain Dew or Sprite	3.2
Coca-Cola	2.4

Sources: US EPA, *Modern Food Microbiology* (7th Ed.), Agric. Food Chem. 2016. doi:10.1021/acs.jafc.6b03013, J. Am. Dent. Assoc. 2016. doi:10.1016/j.adaj.2015.10.019, Br. Dent. J. 190: 374, 2001.



## Tips:

- Do NOT brush your teeth right after a sugary drink— instead, wait 30 mins to brush
- Drink soda/carbonated beverages in moderation
- Use a straw for acidic beverages – minimizes interactions with acids
- Drink a lot of water— helps you stay hydrated and washes away acids
- Don't sip drinks throughout the day; drink in one sitting
- Avoid adding sugar to coffee and tea
- Never drink sugary/ acidic beverages before you go to bed
- Drink carbonated beverages with food to keep the pH up
- Drink dark drinks with fibrous fruits and veggies to minimize staining
- Add milk/ cream to coffee or tea

Admin. (2020, April 17). How different types of beverages affect your teeth – the good and the bad. Miller Hill Dental. Retrieved February 1, 2022, from <https://millerhilldental.com/how-different-types-of-beverages-affect-your-teeth-the-good-and-the-bad/#:~:text=Anything%20that%20measures%205.5%20or,all%20have%20high%20acid%20levels>  
 The dental benefits and detriments to coffee and tea. Cascadia Dental Specialists. (2021, March 30). Retrieved February 1, 2022, from <https://cascadiadental.com/blog/coffee-or-tea/>  
 Godavathy, D., Naik, R., Gali, P. K., Ahmed Mujib, B. R., & Reddy Baddam, V. R. (2020). Can coffee combat caries? an in vitro study. *Journal of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology*, 24(0), 64. [https://doi.org/10.4103/jomfp.jomfp\\_172\\_19](https://doi.org/10.4103/jomfp.jomfp_172_19)  
 Is your seltzer habit harming your teeth? Center for Science in the Public Interest. (2018, July 31). Retrieved February 1, 2022, from <https://www.espinet.org/tip/your-seltzer-habit-harming-your-teeth>  
 Mcymer. (2020, October 9). Is seltzer really bad for your teeth? Espire Dental Wed Love to See Your Smile Again Is Seltzer Really Bad for Your Teeth Comments. Retrieved February 1, 2022, from <https://espiredental.com/is-seltzer-really-bad-for-your-teeth/#:~:text=When%20you%20drink%20seltzer%20or,and%20compromise%20your%20dental%20health>  
 Tooth decay. Rethink Sugary Drink. (n.d.). Retrieved February 1, 2022, from <https://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/facts/tooth-decay.html>  
 What is better for your teeth- tea or coffee? Delta Dental. (2018, February 8). Retrieved February 1, 2022, from <http://blog.deltadentalmn.org/which-is-better-for-your-teeth-tea-or-coffee>