

## Newsletter

### **Tooth Sensitivity: What Causes it and How Can it Be Prevented?**

Sensitive teeth can prevent you from enjoying your favorite frozen treat in the summer or a hot apple cider in the fall. It can even make brushing your teeth painful. While the sensitive teeth may be caused by a cavity or infection, there are many different reasons why teeth can become sensitive. Keep reading to learn the ways in which teeth can become sensitive and how you can prevent it from happening.

The first and most important thing to know about sensitive teeth is that it is an indicator that something is wrong. Sometimes the problem is simple and requires minor changes to fix it. Other times, you may need to see your dentist to have the problem solved. If you are experiencing sensitive teeth, you should visit your dentist to rule out any issues that need immediate attention.

Issues that may need immediate attention include cavities or infections. Teeth can become sensitive when there is a cavity or if there is an infection in the tooth or the gums. Signs that there is a tooth infected:

- Sensitivity
- Pain while chewing
- Sore gums
- A dark spot on the tooth

Signs there is a gum infection:

- Loose teeth
- Red, irritated gums
- Bleeding gums
- Painful gums

In these cases, your dentist will need to take immediate action to resolve the infection and prevent any further spreading.

In other cases, your teeth may be sensitive because of worn down enamel. This can happen in many different ways. The first thing you should look at is how you are brushing your teeth. If you are using a toothbrush with stiff bristles or are applying too much pressure when brushing, you could actually be damaging your enamel. All you need are soft bristles and a light touch.

The next thing to look at is what you are eating and drinking. Acidic food can eat away at our enamel if consumed too frequently. Citrus fruits are still great for our health, but they should be consumed in moderation. Acidic drinks like pop and

energy drinks should be enjoyed sparingly, if at all. In addition, if you brush your teeth too soon after eating (especially after eating something acidic), you could brush away enamel. This is because the acid in our food softens our enamel. Wait at least thirty minutes after eating before you brush your teeth to allow the enamel to re-harden.

The last thing that could be happening is enamel wear-down from your own teeth. If you clench or grind your teeth, you are probably wearing away at enamel and causing sensitivity. Wearing a mouth guard, especially at night, can help with this. In other cases, you may have malocclusion, a misalignment in your teeth. This can cause teeth to rub together in the wrong way but can be easily fixed with an occlusal adjustment.

If you are experiencing sensitive teeth, do not wait to schedule an appointment with your dentist. It could be a simple fix or a warning sign of something more serious.

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