



DENTAL EROSION

Dental erosion, also known as erosive tooth wear, is a common oral condition which involves the loss of the enamel (hard structure of the teeth) due to acids from food and drinks or acids coming from the stomach. These acids can easily dissolve the hydroxyapatite crystals (what makes up the hard part of the tooth) of the enamel leading to surface loss.

How does dental erosion happen?



Whenever you eat or drink anything acidic, the tooth enamel softens and loses some of its mineral content. Saliva then acts to cancel out the acidity and bring your mouth back to its natural balance. However, there are times when acid attack happens a lot and your mouth doesn't have a chance to repair itself. This leads to the enamel being brushed away bit by bit until the tooth surface is lost. When the enamel is worn away, sensitivity and pain may ensue following contact with hot, cold or acidic food and drinks.

There are also some medical conditions that can cause dental erosion, such as bulimia and reflux. Vomit contains a high level of acid, therefore patients who suffer from these conditions have a higher risk of dental erosion.

How can I help prevent dental erosion?

Plain, still water is still the best drink for your teeth. But if you are a lover of fizzy drinks, alcopops, sodas, carbonated drinks, fruit juices (particularly citrus juices), you have to be very careful with your consumption and limit it during meal times. Either drink quickly or use a straw so that the fluids do not have much contact with your teeth. After intake, you can finish off with milk or cheese, which helps to cancel out the acid or chew sugar-free gum to help produce more saliva to counteract the acid in your mouth after eating.

If brushing your teeth, wait an hour after eating acidic food and drinks to allow for your teeth to build up its mineral content again. Brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste.

How can it be treated if I am suffering from dental erosion?

Dental erosion doesn't always necessitate a treatment, but with regular check-ups from your dentist, the problem can be prevented from getting any worse. Protection of the enamel and dentine underneath will help prevent sensitivity. In many cases, bonding a filling into the tooth is enough to repair it, or fitting a veneer or crown over the tooth is helpful for more severe conditions.

If you have any further concerns about this issue, it is highly recommended that you seek professional dental and medical advice as soon as possible.

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