

## **Tooth Erosion**

Tooth erosion is a process where the acids in food and drinks wear down the enamel of your teeth. Today's diets include many foods and drinks that contain acid and can erode teeth. Some are healthy like fruit juices. Some are not, like carbonated soft drinks.

### **Acid is the leading cause of tooth erosion.**

Tooth erosion occurs when acidic chemicals wear away a tooth's outer covering or enamel.

When exposed to acidic foods and drinks, tooth enamel is temporarily softened and loses mineral content. Saliva can neutralize the acidity and reharden the enamel. But because rehardening occurs slowly, with continual acid exposure, the tooth does not have time to repair itself.

Over time, tooth erosion leaves the inner tooth structure exposed, weakened, and sensitive. When the enamel is softend we brush our teeth, the tooth enamel can be worn away more easily.

Thinning of the enamel can cause everything from tooth sensitivity to tooth loss.

### **Signs of tooth erosion.**

Early signs:

1. Sensitivity when consuming hot or cold foods or drinks.
2. A yellowish appearance as the tooth enamel thins.
3. A rounded "sandblasted" look on the surface of the teeth.

Later signs:

1. Transparency on the biting edge.
2. A darker, more yellow appearance.
3. Extreme sensitivity to hot or cold.
4. Small dents on the tooth surface.

### **What you can do to prevent tooth erosion:**

It is impossible to completely avoid the effects of acid erosion on your teeth. The challenge is to minimize the amount of time your teeth are exposed to acids.

1. Reduce or eliminate carbonated soft drinks.
2. Use a straw directed to the back of your mouth to reduce the contact your teeth have with acids.
3. Drink acidic drinks quickly. Don't hold them in your mouth or take many sips over a long period of time.
4. Don't suck on sour fruits, candies, or frozen fruit juices.

5. After you eat and drink, rinse your mouth out with water right after consuming acidic fruits and drinks or food.
6. Chew sugar free gum to increase saliva flow in your mouth.
7. Use a soft toothbrush, and brush gently. Brush your teeth twice a day.
8. Use a toothpaste that is designed to rehardened softened tooth enamel.
9. Get regular dental checkups.