

Tips for Good Oral Health: **TOOTH EROSION**

Erosion is the loss of the outer surface of the tooth - dental enamel - that is caused by acid attack. This is different from bacterial acid attack that we call tooth decay. Enamel is the hard outer surface of the tooth seen when we smile and it protects the sensitive dentine underneath. Erosion of the enamel can lead to exposure of the dentine, which may lead to pain and sensitivity with cold foods and drinks.

Erosion is a slow process that people generally do not become aware of until significant enamel is already lost. Erosion often shows up as hollows on the top surface of the molar teeth or the teeth seem to become smaller or thinner as the enamel erodes away. As the enamel wears away exposing the underlying dentine the teeth may appear a darker yellow colour -the colour of the dentine- and sensitivity to hot, cold or acidic foods and drinks may become noticeable.

How to prevent dental erosion?

- Limit the number of times each day you eat and drink acid foods and drinks - this reduces the number of acid attacks on your teeth
- Don't hold your drinks in the mouth or swish the drinks around your mouth
- Finish your meals with cheese or a milk drink as this will help to neutralize the dietary acids
- If you eat or drink anything acidic, wait for about one hour before brushing your teeth. Brushing straight after acidic foods and drinks may cause even more enamel damage.



Article sourced from New Zealand Dental Association

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