



Tooth erosion

Erosion

Dental erosion is the loss of tooth enamel and other tooth structures due to raised acid levels in the mouth. It is different from dental decay, which is caused by bacteria in the mouth turning sugar into acid.

As tooth structure is eroded, teeth become weaker and pain and sensitivity can occur.

Signs that your teeth are eroding

- Sensitivity.
- Tiny chips or sharp edges.
- The teeth look a bit transparent.

What raises our acid levels?

- Frequent intake of soft drinks (cola drinks and lemonade are the worst), sports drinks, citrus fruits, lemon juice or water with lemon juice added, and other fruit juices.
- Some medications, such as chewable Vitamin C tablets and some cough syrups, are acidic.
- Low salivary flow, which can be caused by smoking, medications or medical conditions such as diabetes, Sjogren's syndrome.
- Exercise dehydration.
- Gastric reflux, eg, pregnancy, bulimia, oesophageal hernia, GORD.

Treatment for erosion

Bonding resin over the eroded areas can strengthen the teeth, protecting them from further wear.

Caring for your teeth

- Avoid dietary acids or at least restrict them. Limit acidic drinks to mealtimes and use a drinking straw.
- If you consume acidic food, drink a glass of water immediately afterwards or at least rinse your mouth out with water.
- Do not brush your teeth immediately after acid exposure, as this will remove the surface of the teeth that have been eroded. Delay brushing your teeth for at least 40 minutes to give saliva time to help stabilise the tooth enamel.
- Drink at least two litres of water per day to avoid dehydration.
- Chewing sugarless gum after meals for 20 minutes will stimulate salivary flow.
- For athletes, rehydrate with water after exercise.
- Brush twice daily using a soft toothbrush and nonabrasive toothpaste.
- Maintain regular visits to your dentist.

Examples of treating erosion

Before treatment, showing the loss of enamel from front and back teeth. The extreme erosion on the right image has exposed the sensitive dentine (which looks dark yellow).



After treatment, the teeth are restored to their former shape, and the exposed dentine is covered, protecting it from further damage.



Important to know

- This page contains general information about dental erosion. It cannot replace individualised advice from your dental practitioner. Please consult your dentist for specific recommendations about your oral health and necessary treatments.